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# **PRESENT DAY GOLF**

**BY**  
**GEORGE DUNCAN**  
**AND**  
**BERNARD DARWIN**

**ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS BY**  
**G. W. BELDAM**

**NEW**  **YORK**  
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*By* GEORGE DUNCAN

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**PART I**  
**BY**  
**GEORGE DUNCAN**



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## Chapter I.      *The Methods of Champions*

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### POWER IN THE LONG GAME AND HOW THEY GET IT

POWER in the long game is to-day of the very first importance. I never can agree with Willie Park when he says that "the man who can putt is a match for any one." There seems to be a law of averages which works out fairly certainly in putting. It may seem strange, but it is perfectly true that when a man becomes a first-class golfer his putting becomes "just average." I have a case in mind. C. H. Mayo burst into golfing fame, as I did myself, in 1906 at Hollinwell, when he ran up to Sandy Herd in the *News of the World* final. Now Mayo in 1906 was not a first-class golfer, but he certainly could putt, and most people thought his good results were the outcome of the amount of trouble he took on the green. He came to take all this trouble in rather an amusing way. James Braid was in his heyday when Mayo first took part in a tournament. Being a keen student of the game, Mayo had a look at the then champion, who left, as he still leaves, nothing to chance on the green. He thought that this walking up and down the line was the right thing to do; so he proceeded to adopt Braid's "don't hurry" methods. The only difference between them then was that Mayo used to get the putts in, whereas Braid didn't. In time Mayo improved his general game. Then his putting became normal, and





Consequently his trajectory is much lower than either Mitchell's or Ray's.

The difference in method as regards the disposition of weight at the top of the swing comes to this, that Braid being heavy on the left foot at the top of the swing hits the ball down, whereas Ray and Mitchell having less pressure on the left at the top, hit it up. For this reason Braid will outdrive Ray against a wind, and vice versa. One often sees in front of the spot where Braid's ball lay the roots of the grass laid bare by his club, but you will never see this done by Ray. Unfortunately for him Ray cannot successfully apply this extra pressure on the left that he wants when he is battling against a wind, nor can Braid get any lighter on the left when he wants to get height. This is really the ideal to be aimed at: heavy on the left when you want to keep or hit the ball down, and light on the left when you wish to get height.

Mention of playing in a wind brings to my mind some of the wonderful performances of the redoubtable J. H. Taylor. Taylor has always been looked upon as the prospective champion if only it blows hard enough; but I should never back Taylor to beat Braid at keeping a ball down against a head-wind, nor could one ever compare their respective lengths, for Taylor has always played the odd to Braid. The whole secret of Taylor's golf lies in the amount of under-spin he gets on the ball. He has always been content to keep the face of his clubs "open," so sacrificing length for direction. In his old age he threatens to "shut" the face of his club in order to get length, but it cannot be. That left wrist of his works its way

under the handle of the club until there are wrinkles in it which will tell a tale one day. On account of his flat swing Taylor has to be light on his left at the top; as a matter of fact, he requires so little pressure there that he is on the tip of his toe, which cannot possibly take much weight. But Taylor stands a little more in front of the ball than do most players, and this counterbalances the small amount of weight that he has on his left foot at the top of the swing.

Harry Vardon, who is above everything else a stylist, had ten years ago what I call a very comfortable way of getting his poise at the top. He employed a great deal of right hand in the up-swing and did not allow the club-head to lead. This had the effect of bringing practically all the weight from the left foot on to the right; in other words, he had a slight sway of the body. Then, when the club was more than half-way up, the weight gradually followed the club-head forward, so that by the time he had reached the top of the swing the ball of the left toe was carrying a good deal of pressure. Nowadays Vardon's body only occupies during his up-swing the space which it takes up when he is addressing the ball. This means that he pivots more, and a flatter swing results. The weight at the top of the swing is distributed in the same way as by his old method, but this result is arrived at in a different way. The screwing up of the body during the up-swing is physically much harder work than the right and left sway, but this latter method is so exacting in another way that all hard hitting has to be left out.

Here, then, we see that Vardon, Herd, and Ray,



#### A DRIVE BY ABE MITCHELL

This set of pictures is composed of two series, the second of which was taken in order to fill some gaps in the first and so show the entire swing.





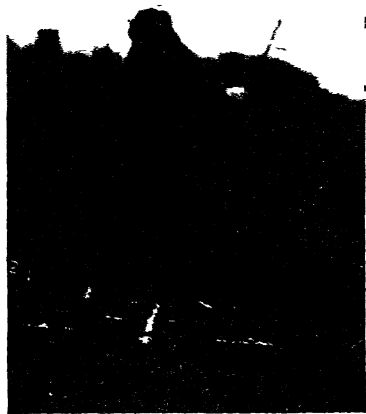
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A DRIVE BY ABE MITCHELL



A DRIVE BY ABE MITCHELL



A DRIVE BY ABE MITCHELL





A DRIVE BY DUNCAN



A DRIVE BY DUNCAN



A DRIVE BY DUNCAN



A DRIVE BY HARRY VARDON



A DRIVE BY HARRY VARDON

after twenty years of swaying in different degrees, have come to make their up-swings in no more space than they take up when addressing the ball. I like the look of Ray and Herd much better now than formerly, but I should like to see Vardon back at his double body movement.

I have said that Vardon's right hand has a lot to do in the making of his swing. As a matter of fact, whether a man has an upright swing or a flat one entirely depends upon whether he is a two-handed swinger, or a left-handed swinger such as J. H. Taylor. In Taylor and Vardon we have the two greatest exponents of the two methods. Taylor works the club to the top of his swing, which is flat, with a gradual turning of the left wrist, so that at the top of the swing this wrist is under the club-handle. His greatest trouble is to keep the right hand out of his up-swing. Vardon is the upright swinger, who slings the club to the top with both hands employed. The movement that I call the "sling" comes from a sudden bending of both wrists, which takes place when the club-head has travelled six inches from the ball. Mitchell, Braid, and Ray are all two-handed swingers. Ray adopts Vardon's method of letting the hands lead the way for a few inches, and then comes the sudden wristwork which actually carries the club to the top. Braid and Mitchell make the club-head lead, so that their swings are flatter, and the wristwork to the top is more gradual. Moreover, they have a way of pivoting suddenly with the body, and this helps the club to the top.

The length of the swing varies in the case of these different players, and in a very interesting way. The

swings of Vardon, Ray, and Mitchell all go beyond the horizontal, while those of Braid and Taylor do not. On account of its flatness Taylor's swing never could have been a long one, such as Vardon had a number of years ago. Personally I am rather in favour of the shorter swing, and to-day there is a general tendency towards a shortening of the swing. If one looks at the photographs taken fifteen years ago and compares them with recent ones, it becomes clear that swings have been cut down considerably. And a good thing, too, as nobody can hit the ball any further with a swing that goes beyond the horizontal than it can be hit with a shorter swing. Only the other day Mitchell was telling me that he had ricked a shoulder muscle, which made his swing for the time being quite perceptibly shorter, and he described in very forcible language the length of the shots he was hitting. "What hopes would he have had with the gutty?" we often hear people say when some one with a swing such as is commonly called a half swing knocks a modern ball two hundred and thirty yards. As a matter of fact, one of the longest drives I ever saw with a gutty was a man whose swing was well short of the horizontal. I never saw the long-hitting Douglas Rolland, but I have been told that he had a "full" swing—that is, one that went beyond the horizontal. There may be this to be said in favour of the long swing. There is not the same tendency to hit straight away as soon as ever the player has arrived at the top. He is not yet in a position to deliver a blow, since his wrists are relaxed and his hands open. There may thus be less danger of his

hitting too soon. On the other hand, the player in this style has to readjust his grip before the blow can be delivered, and this is not an easy matter by any means.



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## *Chapter II. The Methods of Champions* (continued)

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### HOW THEY PLAY IN A WIND

It has been a long-accepted doctrine that at the top of the swing the toe of the club should point to the ground, but it is a fact that championships have been won with clubs the toes of which have not pointed to the ground. Braid is an exponent of the art of what I call shutting the club-face. I mean that at the top of the swing the club-face is nearly pointing to the sky. Taylor, on the other hand, as I said before, keeps the face open, and whether the club-face is open or shut depends upon the position of the left wrist at the top. To keep the face open one has to get the left wrist directly under the handle of the club. Braid starts his swing with his left hand more over than Taylor. Consequently at the top it has a tendency to keep away from under the handle, and he is quite content to let it do so.

Now let us look at the result of the shut and open methods when either of these players is off the line. Taylor with his open-faced club is on the right of the exact line and Braid on the left. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Taylor can make a swiftly flying ball stop just as easily as Braid can a slowly flying one. Braid can make a ball run, and in this Taylor finds the utmost difficulty. At the mo-

ment of impact, just as at the top of the swing, the face of Braid's club is shut, so that he must be hitting the ball nearer to its centre than Taylor does. Taylor with the face open is employing all the loft on his club-face, which must be meeting the ball nearer the bottom, and so he gets more under-spin. Ray and Mitchell have more or less the same method as Taylor of keeping the face of the club open at the top. Vardon and Herd can do either, and open or shut the face according as a particular shot may demand. Vardon, however, prefers it open, while Herd likes to get that bit of hook he is so fond of.

This difference of method in shutting or opening the club-face at the moment of impact has brought about a difference of opinion as to the depth of the club-face. Taylor can get the height he likes with a depth of an inch and a half or perhaps a little more, whereas Braid must have a shallower face. Ray uses a deep-faced driver, and even then has difficulty in keeping the ball down on account of his left wrist being so much under the handle at the top. Mitchell, like Ray, uses deep-faced clubs. He also gets the left wrist under the shaft at the top, but not so much as Ray does, for he has a straight left arm.

It must be admitted that the angle of shaft at the top of the swing is much more important to the man in the street than the angle of the face.

The opening and shutting of the club-face is a very difficult and delicate operation. I say elsewhere, but say again here, that for the average golfer it is best to stand in the old ways and not experiment with the shut face. Nevertheless, it can be done, and the ability

to do it is a very great asset. The golf at Deal at the time of the Open Championship in June of last year was a great test in this respect. A cross-wind from the land blew on one's back going out and in one's face coming home. Braid or Jim Barnes found it easiest to keep on the fairway going out, as they naturally shut the face and so held the ball up into the wind, but their difficulties from the tee started on the way home. For the home-coming drives Ray or Mitchell was the man, or any one of those players who employ the open face. A lot of people think that a first-class player uses a cross-wind to help him get distance, but this is quite a mistake. Any first-class player is quite content to find the fairway when playing in a cross-wind. This can be achieved with least difficulty by sacrificing a few yards of length. Thus it is easier to drive the ball into a left-hand wind with a shut club-face than to open the face and allow for a little slice. In just the same way it is easier to keep the ball on the fairway with an open face when the wind is in your face and the natural tendency is to hook. These methods entail, of course, a sacrifice of distance. Every now and then one comes to a fairway which is wide enough to risk a bit of hook or cut as the case may be, but I have never yet seen any one good enough consistently to use the wind: it is too risky a business. Even if it came off eight times in ten—and one must be very clever to accomplish so much—the chances are that a bunker would find one of the two shots that were off the course. One cannot afford this at a long hole, and what would be gained

by another ten yards of length from the tee would hardly make up for getting badly into a bunker.

The holding up of the ball into a left-hand wind is easy to Braid on account of his left hand being so far over. Standing opposite Braid one can see nearly all the back of his left hand, and this all helps the shutting of his club-face. In the case of a player like Ray one can only see two knuckles of his left hand. The only hope he has of driving the ball into the wind lies in shutting the face of the club with the right hand—that is to say, as soon as he starts his up-swing he must turn the club-face towards the ground instead of letting it turn naturally away from it. This extra right hand or wrist movement has also the effect of altering the plane of the swing and makes it more upright. So much for the wind from left to right. Now let us see what Braid does to keep on the fairway in a wind from the right. At St. Andrews he wouldn't alter his natural methods much, for is not the Auld Grey Toon the hooker's paradise? We will go back to Deal, where it was no joke to get off the course no matter on which side. The first hole where he would have had to try an alteration in his style would have been the twelfth. Here one had to hit a good straight one; a bit of hook or slice meant a five, whereas a straight one gave one a reasonable chance of a four. We cannot see Braid altering the angle of his club-face with his hands or wristwork during the swing. He does it rather with his body: I will say by restricted pivoting. When he wishes to hold a ball up into a right-hand wind he depends upon the amount that he allows the shoulders and hips to turn on the up-swing.

In this case he will not turn them quite so much, making his up-swing more upright. Thus the club-head will come down with a more upright swing and more directly on the ball, whereas Braid's natural bent is to come on to the ball from inside the line of flight.

The angle of the club-shaft has also a lot to do with the way in which the ball is going to travel. Looking from the green at the player on the tee a keen student of the game can tell, when the club is at the top of the swing, what sort of a shot is intended. For instance, if Braid wishes to make the ball swerve from right to left, his club-head at the top of the swing will point more at the right of the fairway, whereas if a straight one is wanted it will point at the middle of the course. When Ray wishes a little left to right spin his club-head will point to the left of the middle of the fairway. A club-head which at the top points to the left of the centre of the course must have a tendency to cross the line of flight at impact; but it does not necessarily follow that the ball will swerve from left to right. The club-face must be open to accomplish this: if it is shut, the ball will be driven straight to the left, which means that the shutting of the club-face counteracts the inward blow. Just the reverse happens when the player is trying to get a little draw on the ball. The club-head may at the top of the swing be pointing at the right of the fairway, but unless the club-face is shut at impact he will not get his pull: the ball will go straight out to the right. Now take the case in which the ball is pushed out. We see this happen most commonly when the ball has to be driven against a





**JAMES BRAVID**

At the top of the swing The left wrist is not under the shaft and the club face is shut.



**JAMES BRAVID**

Nearly at the finish of a drive, showing the natural "climb over" of the right hand which begins immediately after impact.

head-wind. One naturally tries in these circumstances to keep the ball down as much as possible by putting additional pressure on the left foot during the up-swing. In this position, when the left foot is carrying most of the weight, the timing of the effort has to be a little longer delayed than in an ordinary shot, because the weight has farther to travel before it gets behind the club at impact. There is a temptation to "hit too soon from the top"—that is, to lash out the very moment one has arrived at the top of the swing. The consequence will be that the club-head will not have had time to get square at the moment of impact. The result of this shot the professional would describe by saying that he "pushed it." The man in the street is describing the same thing when he says, "I got my body in too soon." Remember, however, it does not follow that, because you are heavy on the left foot at the top of the swing and hit out just as soon as ever you arrive there, a push will necessarily result. No, this is far too complicated a game for only one result inevitably to ensue. Oftener than not, a slice results. In that case the weight has suddenly been thrown on to the right leg. On that leg it stays; the club is checked on its forward movement and comes across the ball.

In talking about those who are "too heavy on the left at the top," I am particularly thinking of those gentlemen—they amount perhaps to ten per cent. of the whole golfing population—who have a horror of swaying. In order to avoid swaying their weight on to the right foot they overdo the weight on the left at the top. It is perhaps not such a bad fault as sway-



ing, but it can produce equally bad results. However, for the moment I shall leave these gentlemen and their faults and say a word or two about under-spin. Under-spin is the soul of golf, and here we have the great difference between the amateur and the professional game. The application of under-spin is the real art of golf, and up till now J. H. Taylor had mastered it best, to my way of thinking. His are the methods of the open club-face and of hitting down. Observe that I say "hitting": I do not mean letting the weight of the club and body propel the ball. All these things tend to produce with all clubs the type of shot wherein the ball starts fast and low, gradually rising until it is spent, and then falls straight down with but little life left in it.

There are other players who get as much under-spin as Taylor with wooden clubs. We only see his greatest excellence when he starts playing with his iron clubs. How many players, at a range of anything from fifty yards to one hundred and fifty yards from the hole, can make the ball travel as fast as he can and make it stay on the green? Not so many. So now we have found why Taylor starts favourite in a Championship when it blows. His swifter-travelling ball beats the wind, no matter which direction it comes from, more easily than do the higher and slower-moving balls of his rivals. Taylor has the happy knack of placing himself in such a position when he takes up his stance as ensures his hitting the ball a descending blow. He can hit a ball that is midway between his feet without any difference in the distribution of his weight, whereas other players

have the ball more in front of the middle and so have a tendency to hit the ball up. Braid when playing a long shot is the exception to this rule on account of his being so heavy on his left foot at the top. This in his case gives the same effect as Taylor produces by standing in front. There is always a certain amount of under-spin on the ordinary common or garden shot—that is, the ascending blow—for the simple reason that the ball is hit below its centre. When, however, in a shot of that type the ball has travelled a hundred yards or so in a cross-wind, the wind begins to have its effect on it, whereas a ball that has been hit a descending blow, and has thus the maximum amount of under-spin, will keep its original direction. I do not propose to calculate how often a ball revolves in the course of a two-hundred-yard carry. It is enough for us to learn how to make it revolve as often as possible and whenever possible. As to side-spins, they are the golfers' nightmare, more especially the one that is caused by an inward blow with the club-face open. Now and again a golfer will be heard sorrowfully explaining how he took seven or so through hooking a tee shot. But as a rule there are at least half a dozen slices for every one hook, for the pull comes much nearer than the slice to being a good shot.

I ATTACH the utmost importance to the manner in which way the club is gripped, and being a convert to the overlapping grip I am a great believer in that method. For many years I used the ordinary half-finger, half-palm grip, the same grip as Abe Mitchell adopts to-day. Vardon started the boom in overlapping. I believe J. H. Taylor has never gripped in any other way; Mr. Laidlay did it long before any of them, but it was left to Vardon to make it fashionable. Amongst other converts were Braid and Ben Sayers, who told me it took him six months to hit the ball straight in the new way. He, like most other players who let the left thumb lie down the shaft for the first time, had a tendency to slice. But perseverance prevailed, and all Sayers wishes now is to be forty years younger. Mr. John Ball and Sandy Herd are notable players who could not be converted to the new method, though I believe the latter had a go at it, but he missed the feel of the club in his palm. Mr. Hilton got as far as allowing the little finger to overlap, but never got the left thumb down the shaft.

All other things being equal, there is a sacrifice of power in adopting a finger grip, as one has much more power with a palm grip, but I thought the finding of the fairway more often was worth the sacrifice. Another important point in favour of the finger grip

is that one has greater freedom of wrist, and this makes shots possible that are not "on" with a palm grip. Now there are all sorts of overlapping grips, and quite a lot of golfers get overlapping and interlocking confused. For instance, a pupil of mine assured me he had been taught the Vardon grip. His tutor was a friend, by the way. The first thing I noticed was that he had a bad interlocking grip and several enlarged finger-joints. I asked him what was wrong with them, and he assured me it was gout. I said I thought it was the way he gripped his club that was the cause of it, and he admitted that his doctor had said it was not gout. I met a professional the other day who had the same trouble through adopting an interlocking grip.

One often sees a grip in which during the waggle the club is slipping and sliding between the first finger and thumb of the right hand. As we waggle so we shall swing, and the player who has a sliding grip during the address will let the club slip in his swing. I know only one golfer who gets a good result from a sliding grip, and he took some time to convince me that he actually had such a grip. Unfortunately it is only too true. I am referring to James Sherlock, and there is no question about his results. He is a great player, who would have been greater had he had a punch. J. H. Taylor may also be mentioned amongst those who allow the club to slide at the top, but in Taylor's case it is so very little—from the second knuckle to the third of the right forefinger—whereas Sherlock allows his club to drop into the web at the base of the thumb. I think Taylor would get

equally good results if he were, like Vardon, to make the V that is formed between the thumb and forefinger smaller, in which case there is no room for slipping; but this would not apply in Sherlock's case, as he depends upon that slip to complete his up-swing. If he were to shut up that space between the thumb and forefinger, he would have to pivot more in order to complete his swing, and I suppose he knows which is easier.

Sandy Herd has a similar right-hand grip to Sherlock, except that he shuts the space up so that there is no sliding. Mr. John Ball, though he has a palm grip, wedges the club firmly in the web, and though there is a certain amount of "give" there is no sliding.

Then there are those good players Mr. Hilton and Edward Ray, who relax their grips at the top more than most other players. A certain amount of relaxing takes place at the top in most people's swings, and the fact that Ray allows both palms to leave the club is to be accounted for by the length of his swing. He has an upright swing which goes beyond the horizontal, so that it is impossible for him to keep his hands shut. In other words, if Ray's swing were not so long he would not open his hands so much at the top. I account for Mr. Hilton relaxing at the top by the way in which he holds the club. His grip is more of a finger than a palm one and the fingers are rather spread out, so that at the top they have much more difficulty in keeping their position on the club than if they were crowded together in the first place.

I have never yet been able to fathom why I should have played for quite a long time in my early career

with my left hand below my right, although I would always throw a cricket ball with my right. I have a youngster who overlaps his left over his right, holds the left hand at the bottom and can't do anything else. He has a sister who never attempted anything but the orthodox way. It cannot be imitation in the boy's case, as he never sees anything but the right below the left; but it seems natural to thirty per cent. of youngsters to grip with the left below the right. One sees it every day amongst very young caddie boys, but never yet have I seen a grown-up beginner grasp a club in this fashion. Fortunately I was persuaded to change my grip, and went ahead from then.

Another type of grip often seen is that in which both hands tend to be under the shaft. Sometimes the left is where it should be, but the right is under. The eternal struggle is against the natural tendency of the master hand—the right—to dominate the situation, and thank goodness we have one piece of old teaching that still holds good to-day, namely, "loose with the right." This means that we must not grip tight with the right hand when addressing and at the start of the up-swing.

I really think the worst grip of all is the one where both hands are under the shaft, of course in opposite directions. The left hand is in such a hopeless position and the right in such a strong one, that the latter takes charge and ruins the swing. As a matter of fact, we should strengthen the left, as it has quite a lot to do with the making of the swing. This should be done by bringing it over towards the right. We should weaken the right by bringing it towards the left.

equally good results if he were, like Vardon, to make the V that is formed between the thumb and forefinger smaller, in which case there is no room for slipping; but this would not apply in Sherlock's case, as he depends upon that slip to complete his up-swing. If he were to shut up that space between the thumb and forefinger, he would have to pivot more in order to complete his swing, and I suppose he knows which is easier.

Sandy Herd has a similar right-hand grip to Sherlock, except that he shuts the space up so that there is no sliding. Mr. John Ball, though he has a palm grip, wedges the club firmly in the web, and though there is a certain amount of "give" there is no sliding.

Then there are those good players Mr. Hilton and Edward Ray, who relax their grips at the top more than most other players. A certain amount of relaxing takes place at the top in most people's swings, and the fact that Ray allows both palms to leave the club is to be accounted for by the length of his swing. He has an upright swing which goes beyond the horizontal, so that it is impossible for him to keep his hands shut. In other words, if Ray's swing were not so long he would not open his hands so much at the top. I account for Mr. Hilton relaxing at the top by the way in which he holds the club. His grip is more of a finger than a palm one and the fingers are rather spread out, so that at the top they have much more difficulty in keeping their position on the club than if they were crowded together in the first place.

I have never yet been able to fathom why I should have played for quite a long time in my early career

with my left hand below my right, although I would always throw a cricket ball with my right. I have a youngster who overlaps his left over his right, holds the left hand at the bottom and can't do anything else. He has a sister who never attempted anything but the orthodox way. It cannot be imitation in the boy's case, as he never sees anything but the right below the left; but it seems natural to thirty per cent. of youngsters to grip with the left below the right. One sees it every day amongst very young caddie boys, but never yet have I seen a grown-up beginner grasp a club in this fashion. Fortunately I was persuaded to change my grip, and went ahead from then.

Another type of grip often seen is that in which both hands tend to be under the shaft. Sometimes the left is where it should be, but the right is under. The eternal struggle is against the natural tendency of the master hand—the right—to dominate the situation, and thank goodness we have one piece of old teaching that still holds good to-day, namely, "loose with the right." This means that we must not grip tight with the right hand when addressing and at the start of the up-swing.

I really think the worst grip of all is the one where both hands are under the shaft, of course in opposite directions. The left hand is in such a hopeless position and the right in such a strong one, that the latter takes charge and ruins the swing. As a matter of fact, we should strengthen the left, as it has quite a lot to do with the making of the swing. This should be done by bringing it over towards the right. We should weaken the right by bringing it towards the left.



There is no doubt whatever that one can get greater distances when both hands are on the right-hand side of the club—in other words, when all the knuckles of the left hand are showing and the knuckles of the right hand are pointing to the ground. But this brings about a tendency to shut the club-face, which is dangerous. The ideal position of the left hand is such that it holds the club well in the roots of the fingers, so that two knuckles are showing, while the thumb is lying on the shaft and pointing down the back of it. I often find this left thumb stretched at full length down the shaft, but this is not a good plan. Some golfers do not pivot so much as others, and in their case it is advisable to have three knuckles of the left hand showing. This showing of an extra knuckle will give a tendency to shut the club-face at the top, and so counteract the normal tendency to slice produced by incomplete pivoting. I admit this is rather a desperate cure, but slicing is a desperate disease, and I know this showing of the third knuckle has given good results in the case of golfers who lift the club to the top with the right hand.

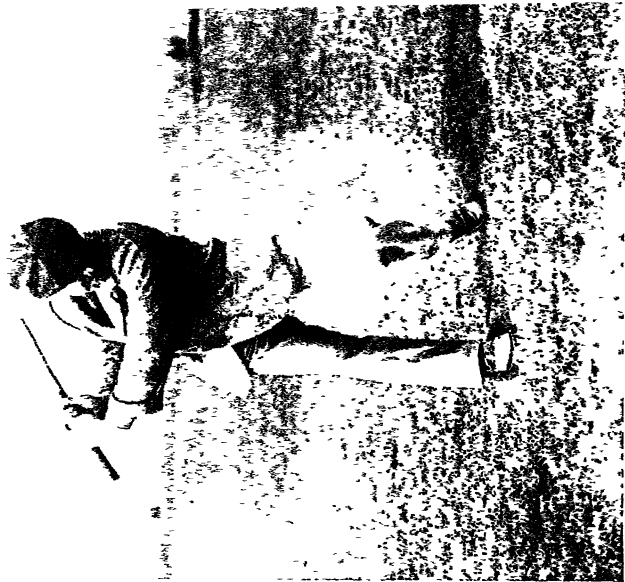
The small finger of the right hand fits plumb on the knuckle on the left forefinger, and with the right hand as with the left the club should be held in the roots of the fingers. I have great difficulty in getting my pupils to hold enough in the fingers, as they naturally feel more power when holding in the palm; but it is so much easier to control the club with a finger grip that it is worth making the sacrifice of power. By bringing the hands as close together as we do in the overlapping grip, we also lose a good





J. H. TAYLOR

At the top of the swing, showing the left wrist under the shaft and the club face open.



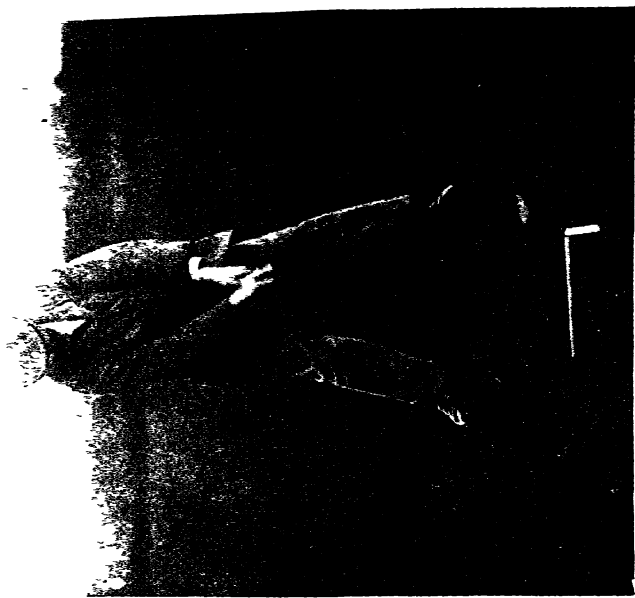
J H TAYLOR

At the top of a mashie shot. The left wrist is in correct position for this shot, under the shaft, and the blade open.



J. H. TAYLOR

Halfway down. A moment of great tension.



J H TAYLOR

At the moment of impact in a dive There is surprisingly little tension noticeable



**J. H. TAYLOR**

Almost at the finish. The feet are kept firmly on the ground and there is a pronounced "climb over" of the wrists

deal of leverage, but an extra twenty pounds in leverage coming down is not so valuable as the fact of the hands working in harmony. The hands should be closed as much as possible: and, most important of all, we must not grip tightly with the right hand when addressing or at the start of the swing. To do that is to "press." The right hand should only begin to take charge when the club has travelled half-way on the up-swing.

Of course, the expert player can shift his grip at will. For instance, should he wish to cut a shot or make the ball rise quickly, he then brings both hands more over the shaft, which has the effect of opening the club-face. Should he wish to get a little draw, he brings the left over to just the extent of showing another knuckle and puts the right *under*. This has the opposite effect and shuts the face. Even when he is not "trying something," the left hand naturally alters its position on the club. For example, the nearer he comes to the hole the greater will be its tendency to go more under. This is a very slight alteration, but it should take place. Finally, the great thing in the grip, no matter how you hold the club, is not to put any tension on the grip of the right hand until you are well on your way on the up-swing.

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## *Chapter IV.      Wrist Action and Pivoting*

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I HAVE often heard the drive in golf described as a sweep, but I have no doubt in my mind that the tee shot is a hit; and the harder you hit the ball, provided everything is right, the further it will go. All those men who are reckoned the longest drivers, such as Mr. Blackwell, Ray, Braid, and Mitchell, hit, and hit mightily hard. They differ just a little in their manner of hitting. First of all they are what I call, for want of a better term, two-handed up-swingers, and naturally they get as much power as possible out of both hands and arms in coming down. The moment at which one really sees the differences in their methods of hitting is when the club reaches the top of the swing. In each case, except Braid's, the club is beyond the horizontal. Braid for a long time also had a long swing, but shortened it in 1912. We see Mr. Blackwell and Ray with the left wrist under the handle at the top and the club-face open. Mitchell's club-face also tends to be open, but not to the same extent as that of Mr. Blackwell or Ray. The position of the hands during address will determine the position of the wrists at the top, and Braid having both hands more over towards the back of the shaft will have the left wrist less under at the top. On the position at this point depends the type of shot that will be struck, whether it will have a low trajectory with run or be one that is all carry.

It is perhaps a good thing for golfers generally that they cannot see the position of their wrists, at the top; otherwise they would be struggling with the old-fashioned idea that both wrists must at the top of the swing be under the shaft. As a matter of fact, this is the correct thing to do if one wishes a little cut. I am not going to be bold enough to say that having the wrists under the shaft is the initial cause of all slicing, but it has a great deal to do with it. Two very different cases are those of Braid and Ray. Ray grips his club so that both V's point straight down the club, while Braid's V's are pointing at the back of the club. Now the position at the top is that Ray's wrists are much more under the handle than Braid's. Consequently Ray's club-face is open and Braid's is shut—that is to say, pointing upwards. This gives him an inclination when he is off the line to be on the left side of the fairway, whereas Ray is inclined to be on the right.

I have been having a look at Mr. George Beldam's book, *Great Golfers*, and taking a dozen of the best amateurs or professionals I find that eight of them play most of their shots with the club-face pointing upwards. This means that their wrists are not under the shaft at the top of the swing. Against that we have four who keep the face open although their wrists are not exactly under. Mr. John Ball has his elbows a great way apart at the top for a drive, but when he is playing a high mashie shot the wrists work under the shaft. Mr. Hilton and Sandy Herd, I suppose, are the cleverest golfers at opening and shutting the club-face—that is, the putting under of the wrists or



keeping them out according to whether they wish to steer a ball to the right or left. If either of these players wants the ball to go to the right, the left hand will move just a suspicion towards the right of the club and the right hand will move to the left. This will make it easier for them to work their wrists under by the time they get to the top. At the same time their pivoting will be restricted. Should a draw be required the proceedings will be exactly reversed. The hands will move towards the right and the pivoting will be increased.

Of the twelve players in Mr. Beldam's book that I selected, I should say that only one, Taylor, strikes me as employing only one hand, the left, during a part of the uptake of the club. I think this fact may account for his abnormally flat swing. Taylor starts his uptake with a turn of his left wrist, and when this is completed, which is roughly three-quarters of the way up, his right hand takes charge and completes the swing with a half turn towards his head. I should describe Taylor's up-swing as a gradual turning of the wrists, first of the left and then of the right. Now Vardon's swing, which might better be described as a sling, is totally different, in that he uses both hands straight away in taking up the club. He actually drags the club nearly straight back for the first six inches; there is no turning of the left wrist yet, as the right is in charge. Then comes a sudden sling of both wrists which carries him to the top of an upright swing.

The greatest trouble that both Taylor and Vardon have in playing golf is to keep the right from doing

more than its share in the up-swing. It is a very common trouble with many less famous golfers, so often are we tempted to try a little extra pressure. Then that right hand increases its pressure and the whole swing is spoiled. Naturally if the right hand is gripping the club tight it will take the nearest way to the top, and instead of our swinging or slinging the club up it is lifted up. (It is impossible to get the true arc if the right hand absolutely overpowers the left at the start, as the left shoulder is doing nothing, and a swing cannot be accomplished unless the left shoulder is moving.) This brings us to pivoting, but before I say something about that I ought to give a definite opinion as to which is the better method—to have the left wrist under or not. I have little hesitation in saying that for the average golfer it will be better for him to get the left wrist as nearly under the shaft as possible, since the shut-face method is very dangerous. How often does one find a player using a brassy, yes and sometimes a spoon, off the tee! Or perhaps he comes into the shop to have just a little more loft put on the face of his wooden club. And all the time it was not the face but the shutting of it that was the trouble.

Now for something as to "pivoting." A good player can best be picked out from a distance by watching how much space his body occupies during his uptake. A good golfer should not as a rule use any more space with his trunk during the swing than that which he takes up when addressing the ball. I have seen a lot of players pivoting on the ball of the left foot, but the only good one was Massy, the famous French-

man. Screwing the body round on the left foot is not pivoting. Pivoting is a gradual turning of the body, which starts simultaneously with the club-head and continues until the club reaches the top, and the two main points to watch are the left shoulder and the right hip. Some people will tell you that the shoulder is the more important, and others the hip. I think it on the whole the best plan to tell my pupils to bear both equally in mind.

Really, I feel almost inclined to say that pivoting is the whole secret of golf, and that nothing else matters. This much is pretty certain, that unless the left shoulder starts going round with the club it is all up with you and your shot. Once that left shoulder gets left behind it is a bad job. We all know very well the feeling that comes over us at the top of the swing, that we have gone up wrong and so we are going to come down wrong. If we had time to shout at that moment we should scream, "I'm going to miss it." I know that at least one very fine golfer, James Sherlock, does not altogether agree with me about this, and thinks that matters can often be put right on the way down. However, I shall stick to my guns about it, and in my belief that feeling of coming failure at the top of the swing generally comes from bad pivoting and leaving, as I call it, the left shoulder behind.

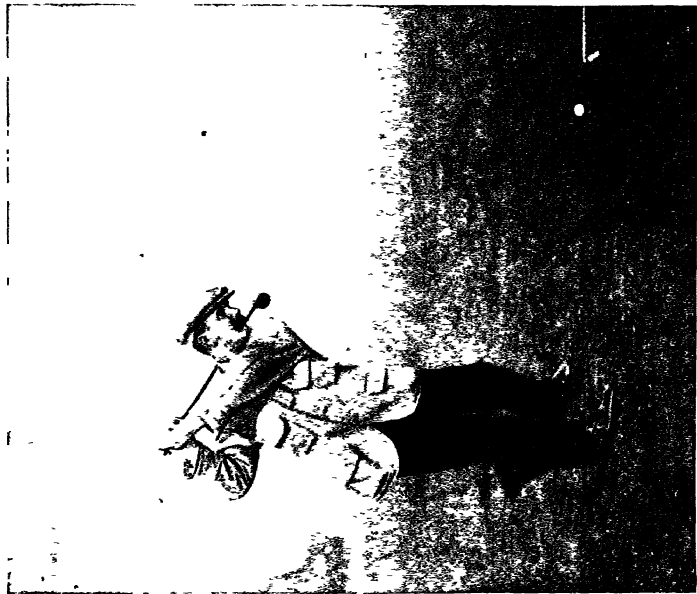
Some players, when they are conscious that they have not pivoted properly in this up-swing, seem to try to make up for it by deliberately whipping the right shoulder round on the way down, but I am afraid that is no good. The coming round of the right

shoulder on the way down ought to follow automatically on the proper coming round of the left shoulder on the way up, and you cannot force the ending to come right when the beginning has been wrong.

To pivot freely and correctly is not an easy thing to do, and I do not pretend that it is. The full turn comes much more easily to some people than others. They are naturally built for it. Abe Mitchell is a splendid example. He turns so fully and freely as he swings, that, if you are standing in front of him, he presents nearly his whole back to you. Another instance is that of Mr. John Ball. He has the most beautiful pivoting movement imaginable, and seems to be able to turn without the very slightest effort. This perfect and easy pivoting has been, I think, the strong point of his game. It seems to make things so simple for him. Indeed, the value of good pivoting cannot be exaggerated. When things go wrong it is always worth thinking about, because it is so easy to imagine that you are doing it properly, when in fact you are not fully completing the turning movement in the up-swing. The stance may make correct pivoting harder or easier. I think I ought to say something quite definitely on the question of stance, because I have a very decided opinion about it, and this seems a convenient place for me to air it. I am all for the square stance, as opposed to the open. Most good golfers are to-day of the same mind. Especially is this noticeable in America, where they think very hard about their golf. All the good American players are standing palpably square: we saw this in the

case of Hagen and Barnes last year. Moreover, they are getting very good results from it. I believe that the open stance has had its day. In fact, one might say that the world is growing squarer.

It is curious that opinion on this subject has come back to where it started. When the "Badminton" volume on golf and Sir Walter Simpson's *Art of Golf* were written—in the eighties—the authors recommended that, in driving, the player should have his right foot an inch or two in rear of his left. Mr. John Ball then stood open, but he was treated as the exception to prove the rule. Later on, however, came Taylor and Vardon, doing wonderful things and standing also perceptibly open: opinions were revised and many people copied these two champions. To-day Vardon has still a touch of the open stance, but Taylor's stance is far squarer than it used to be. Mr. Ball, too, has for a long while given up his markedly open stance. In these cases Anno Domini may have something to do with it, for an open stance makes it harder work to pivot, but there is more in it than that, I fancy. Of the younger generation Mitchell is the only fine driver I can think of who stands open, and he only does so a very little. When I first came south from Scotland I had a decidedly flat swing and an open stance. As soon as I determined to master the overlapping grip I found myself terribly inclined to slice. I could not get the club to go round properly. Holding the left thumb in its unfamiliar position down the shaft seemed to make me push the club out to the right. To counteract this I squared my stance, overcame the slice, and have stood square ever since.



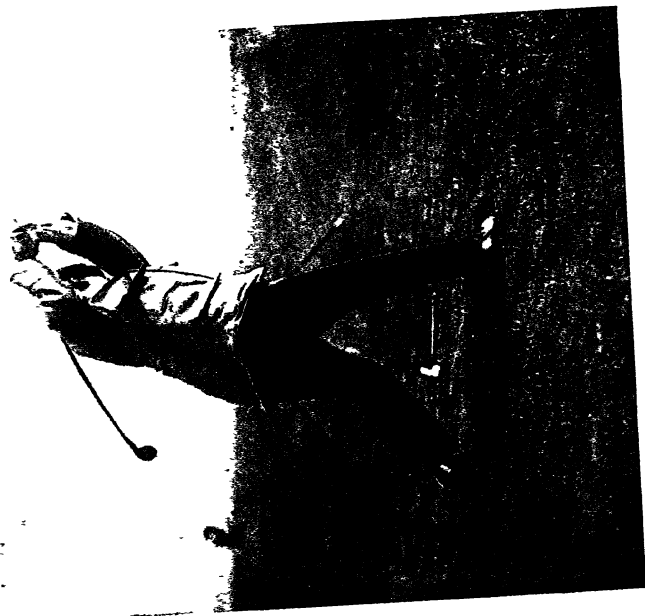
ALEX HERD

At the top of the swing when playing for a draw. The left wrist is not under the shaft and the club face shut.



ALEX HERD

Coming at the ball "from inside."



**ALEX HERD**

Playing to "hold up" the ball with a spoon  
The left wrist is under the shaft and the club face open.



**MR JOHN BALL**

A straight left arm with the left wrist not directly under  
shaft at the top. This tends to shut the face of the club

The finest advertisement that I know for the square stance is Braid. He has never wavered but has always stood square, and for more than twenty years now, day in and day out, he has been as long a driver as any one in the history of the game.

To me the square stance seems to give the easier attitude from which to hit the ball straight. I feel this more and more, and to-day I find myself standing quite square even for little pitching shots. This last perhaps is a peculiarity of my own, but as regards driving I can give some more solid reasons for my belief. It is of the greatest importance to get comfortably and correctly to the top of the swing, because, if you do, the rest will come right too. Now the square stance makes it much easier to get to the top comfortably. If you put the right foot forward and try a swing, you see that decidedly more effort is needed. You have, by comparison, to wrench your body round to get to the proper position. There is an inclination to be lazy in your pivoting, just because pivoting is more difficult. Put the right foot back and pivoting is ever so much easier.

A good illustration of this fact I can give from my own game. There is just one shot in which I feel disposed to stand open, namely, when I am trying to cut the ball up with a spoon. In that "cut up" shot pivoting should be to some extent restricted, and so in playing it I almost instinctively stand a little open, because that stance helps me to restrain my pivoting. In the ordinary driving shot the one thing you do not want to do is to restrict your pivoting. So stand square and make it as easy for yourself as you can.



I should like also to say a word or two here about the length of the swing. The swing has in recent years tended to become shorter, and this may be accounted for by the modern ball, since it takes less getting up than the gutty did. The best way of getting height is to get the left wrist under the shaft, and a long swing is necessary to get it under to the greatest possible extent. Our longest drivers to-day under certain conditions still swing their clubs beyond the horizontal, and they naturally hit a very high shot, as the left wrist has time, on account of the length of their swings, to work under the club, but against a wind they can be outdriven by a shorter swinger who shuts the face. On the whole, however, golfers are to-day swinging shorter than they used to do, and find with the help of the rubber-cored ball they can get all the height they want.

I do not see any necessity for the uptake to go beyond the horizontal, for the reason that once the club is beyond that line the player is out of position for hitting. Even in the old days the club was only taken back so far to allow the left wrist to get under. The hitting does not, or should not, begin until the hands have got into a position whence they can deliver the hardest blow—that is, when they are level with the right shoulder or just below it on the downswing. A certain amount of swing beyond the position from which you are to hit is necessary. There is an adjusting of the balance to be done when you get to the top before you are poised to make your effort. The best way to get to the top is by allowing the club-head to lead, and this can only be done by chiefly

employing the left hand, though a little help from the right is also necessary to improve the pace. The great struggle is against the natural tendency of the right hand to make all the swing. So at the very start of the swing you must remember the old teaching of the "loose right" until half-way up, when the danger of the right ruining the swing is past. The right will then complete the swing. Golfers in the novice stage have great difficulty in keeping the right out of the start of the swing, and also in realising that they have wrist-joints that will bend and turn.

On the down-swing there is a new impetus given to the club at the point where the right hand catches up the left. This has been described as a flick of the wrists, but it is really the leverage caused by the whole of the left side of the body pushing against the right side and so increasing the speed of the club-head at impact. I am indebted to Dr. Cormack, a brother Scot, for drawing my attention to this feature in the swing. I have no doubt in my mind that a great deal of levering takes place just before impact, but this item will come into the discussion of transference of weight.

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## *Chapter V. The Transference of Weight*

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IN first-class golf there are three different methods of transferring the weight of the body during the swing. There is first the sudden pivoting of Braid. Then there is Ray's double body movement. This consists of a half sway to the right during the first half of the up-swing and then a half sway forward to adjust the balance while the swing is being completed. Thirdly, there is Herd's swing. Herd's method consists in starting with most of his weight on the *left* foot and then transferring it to the right. In all cases this is the easiest way to get there in the up-swing, as there is little screwing up of the body from the hips to be done; but it is the most dangerous also, as every golfer knows that a sway when not properly timed is fatal.

Ray's double sway and half screw of the body is to be recommended rather than the complete sway. Here again timing is a more vital factor than in Braid's method of screwing up the body in the same amount of space that it occupied during his address. I much prefer to see a player "standing up" to hit the ball. By that I mean I like to see a player make his up-swing without using any more space than he takes up during his address. Taylor and Mitchell have this merit: as I call it, they "stay there." Remember, however, that the great thing is this: in whatever

way these various players arrive at the top of the swing, they always maintain their balance. Some men have the gift of balance, and poise at the top of the swing comes fairly easy to them. Whether it comes easily or with difficulty it is enormously important.

Every good golfer, unless he is a swayer, addresses the ball with most of the weight on the right leg, and it is a perfectly natural procedure on account of the right hand being below the left. This pulls the right shoulder down and the extra weight on the right leg follows, unless it is fought against by an unnatural squaring of the shoulders.

A good swing is made as much with the body as it is with arms and wrists, and here the great difficulty arises. First of all, most of the weight being on the right leg is already ahead of the club, and this has to be got "inside" as soon as possible, so that the levering of the bodily weight can work against the club and so help it to the top. It is essential that the club-head should lead: I mean by this that the club-head should pass and get ahead of the hands at once. Simultaneously with the movement of the club-head the left shoulder and right hip should begin to turn and the left heel leave the ground. I have said before, and say emphatically again, that at the start of the swing the right hand must not be allowed to overpower the left. If it does so the left shoulder, which is the main factor in making the up-swing, is left behind, the club-head does not pass the hands easily enough, and long before the club-head reaches the ball the swing is ruined.

Lots of nice smooth swings are entirely one-handed

—that is, left-handed on the way up; the right hand is simply on the club waiting to put in the blow coming down. This sort of swing is made by a slow turning of the wrist, but one never sees swingers of this kind very long hitters, though as a rule they hit the ball straight. Should the left hand be allowed to make the whole of the up-swing, speed is lacking: in fact, the whole movement is slow, and speed means distance.

In the two-handed swing, which is the natural method and is adopted by nearly all good players, an immediate turning of the left wrist is not necessary provided that the left hand is held sufficiently over the shaft; the natural half roll of the left forearm is enough during the first half of the up-swing. It is from that point onwards that the left wrist begins to turn and work its way under the club-shaft. I should rather say that it works its way towards that position, as I do not recommend the left wrist actually under the shaft for driving. The only turning that the right wrist does is when the club has got three-quarters of the way up; then the right wrist makes a half turn towards the head. This is a very important movement, for if this is done the club is in such a position that it must hit the ball from the inside.

When I say that, I am thinking particularly of those players who do not pivot very much, either because it is their natural method not to do so, or because they find it physically difficult. They may be too old or too stiff or even too fat. In the case of those who pivot freely, the turn of the shoulders naturally brings the club at the top of the swing to the right

position from which to start the downward blow. With a restricted pivot this position is not reached naturally, and then this little half-turn of the right wrist is valuable in getting the club there. If you try a swing with very little pivoting you will see that this is so. You will realise that you want the turn of the right wrist in order to feel that you are comfortable and can hit out. Without it you will feel that you are going to hit across the ball on the way down.

I can think of one very fine player who had this half-turn of the right wrist in a very marked degree. This is James Hepburn, who is now in America. He stood remarkably fast-footed in his up-swing and so did not pivot much, but he had to perfection this knack of turning the wrist so as to get the club to the right place to hit from. Massy has something of the same thing. It is this wrist-turn which causes the little flourish of the club which used always to be called his "pig's-tail twiddle"; but he has a good deal of pivoting and freedom as well.

The releasing of the left heel simultaneously with the club-head starting on the upward journey should be a gradual movement. One should be careful always to feel the weight that has been taken off the left heel being transferred to the ball of the great toe. The weight passes gradually up the right side until the up-swing is half accomplished. Then the left side starts to take charge of the weight in the levering process, and continues to do so until the uptake is completed, when the ball of the left great toe will be carrying its maximum amount of weight; the maximum allowable, that is to say, but not all the weight.

Bear in mind that all the weight cannot now be on the left, otherwise there will be no balance. When coming down the levering process takes place in converse order, the right side tearing the weight from the left, and passes down until the club catches up with it at impact. Just before impact the left heel is on the ground to receive the weight coming forward on to it. Before this point has been reached, however, the left toe has already had a great deal of pressure on it. I have experimented on this subject and got other people to observe my left foot very closely during my swing, and I have found that half-way down in the down-swing, which is the moment of maximum effort, my left toe is trying to dig its way into the ground harder than at any other time. Incidentally, the fact that half-way down is the moment of effort can be seen in a rather interesting way from photographs. Look at the face of the player, as well as you can, in the series of driving photographs. Clearly he is making a great effort half-way down. At the moment of impact there is, by comparison, an appearance of relaxing. This is particularly noticeable in any photographs of Taylor hitting the ball, although when you watch him in real life you may get the impression that it is at impact that he is putting in all he knows. A little while after impact the relaxation seems to disappear, and there comes again the appearance of great effort, as if the player were hanging fiercely on to the club to stop it flying out of his hand.

However, this is to wander away from the left heel, which had just come on to the ground before the

actual impact, in order to receive the weight. By the time the shot is finished one should be able to do away with the right foot altogether, but I think the question of a good or bad drive has been decided before then. The important question is how the weight is distributed at the top. If the body is balanced at that point, then the finish will naturally be right.

( The height of a shot all depends upon the amount of weight that was on the left foot at the top of the swing. For instance, if one wishes to keep a ball down against a wind, extra weight is crowded on to the left during the uptake. Braid is our longest hitter against a wind, and this is partly because he is naturally heavier on his left foot at the top and partly because he adopts the shut-face method. If a player is heavy on the left foot at the top it means that the weight will be much later in its transference to the right on the down-swing. It appears to me that in Braid's case his weight gets behind his club only at the last possible moment. This makes his blow a descending one and so keeps the ball low.

Taylor, like Braid, hits nearly every shot a descending blow, but does it in a different way. Instead of transferring extra weight on to the left foot during the up-swing, Taylor, when he takes up his stance, stands a little more in front of the ball than most people do. Consequently his weight, like Braid's, is more forward than that of, say, Vardon, who might be described as having a tendency to hit the ball up. I might express it in other language by saying that the bottom of the arc is reached in Vardon's case sooner than in Braid's or Taylor's on account of his having



more weight on the right before impact. Vardon can lean over and hit the ball down when the occasion demands, but that is not his natural way of hitting a ball.

In iron-club play, except in a full cleek shot, the transference of the weight is not quite the same as with wooden clubs. What we all wish to do when using an iron is to hit the type of shot that starts low, gradually rises until it reaches the end of its flight, and then comes nearly straight down. In other words, we want to hit the ball a descending blow beneath its centre. There are two ways of playing this shot. One consists in a marked transference of weight on to the left foot during the up-swing; the other in standing more in front of the ball when addressing it. I recommend the first method. It seems to me much easier to time the transference of the weight when the swing is in action than it is when the weight is put in front before the swing is started. When I say that there is a difference in the weight movement between wooden-club shots and those with irons, I mean that the weight goes forward on to the left foot sooner in the case of an iron shot. The swing is a shorter one; therefore, less pivoting is required, and so the transference of the weight forward feels more like a gradual leaning forward from right to left than anything else. The real difference is this, that the left leg does nearly all the weight-carrying throughout the stroke, and the shorter the shot the more noticeably is this so. At the same time we must have some use for the right leg. The extent of that use is this: when we start the shot the right will

be carrying most of the weight. After we have once started the swing we can very nearly do without it.

There are times, of course, when one has to play a different type of shot than the one with a low trajectory; one has often to get a ball up quickly, it may be with a brassy shot or it may be with a mashie pitch. Naturally we cannot play a full shot with any club without putting a little weight on the left foot. This is the shot in which we have to balance the body without putting more weight on the left foot than we can help. When it comes to the high mashie pitch we can all but do away with the left leg, as it should not have any weight on it during the stroke. But here let me emphasise the fact that what is in this special case a virtue is in playing the ordinary approach a vice. In playing the ordinary approach this is just the trouble of most golfers: that they are short of weight on the left foot during the uptake. One has always a chance of adjusting the weight when a full swing is made, as the club after passing half-way on the uptake begins to move forward and so brings the weight with it; but when a half-swing is being employed, as in an approach, there is no chance of the recovery of balance if the weight is allowed to follow the club. I always tell my pupils to lean against the club during the uptake when a half-shot is being played. The tendency is always to allow the weight of the body to follow the arms and club to the right, and then to hit from a position in which all the weight is on the right leg, whereas it should be mostly on the left.

IN regard to iron play, a great deal has been said and written in the last few years about the push-shot. I must clearly say something about it, and I feel inclined to begin by saying that the push-shot is a myth.

That is rather a startling statement, I know. I don't mean that I do not believe in the shot. It is *the* shot with iron clubs. I do mean that there is nothing mysterious about it. People talk about it as if it were a mystery. It is, in fact, absolutely simple. It all depends on the distribution of the weight. If you have your weight fell forward as you are hitting, you must hit the ball a decidedly descending blow beneath its centre, such as produces under-spin, and that is really all there is to it.

That is the entirely simple explanation of the shot, but I admit that to get the weight properly forward is harder to do than it is to talk about. In writing of the transference of weight I have said how I think it is best done, but I will say it shortly again here. You can either stand well in front of the ball, thus getting your weight on the left foot and keeping it there, or you can start with a certain amount of weight on the right foot and markedly transfer it to the left during the up-swing. I think that the second method is the easier and better, and person-

ally I recommend it. Whichever plan you adopt, the point is that by the time the top of the up-swing is reached you are to have the weight forward on that left foot, and it must not come off it again.

I want to emphasise the last words in that last sentence particularly. I have seen so many of my pupils get their weight on the left foot at the top and then let it come back on to the right foot as they hit. The result is that they finish leaning back on that right foot, sometimes with their left toe actually up in the air, and of course they do not hit the ball the descending blow that they intended. I think what happens is that they get suddenly frightened at the top of the swing when they find themselves leaning over on the left foot, and feel, as it were, on the top of the ball. They forget that the club has got some loft on it which will help them, and feel that they cannot possibly get the ball into the air. So in their terror back they go on to the right foot, and the stroke is ruined.

This management of the weight is much the most important thing that has to be learned in playing the shot, but it is not quite all. The swing has got to be decidedly shorter than the full swing we have been talking about with wooden clubs, and there will consequently be less pivoting. Some golfers find it difficult to shorten their swing. I always tell them to think of keeping the left arm straight, and this acts very well. Sir Walter Simpson very wisely said that the left arm should be regarded as part of the club. Here is a case in which it is particularly well worth remembering.

Given the ground in good condition, I say generally of all shots with iron clubs, except the cleek, "Push them." I am not a great believer in pushing cleek shots. If one plays a push-shot with a cleek one is apt by leaning on the left foot to take off the small amount of loft that there is on the face, and so hit the ball too high up and get no under-spin. Vardon is the finest cleek player in the world, and to my eyes he swings his cleek much as he does his wooden club.

The ground must, as I said, be in tolerably good order for the push-shot to be effective. Unfortunately in winter on inland courses this is often not the case. When the turf is soft and muddy, hitting the ball down does not pay. Then is the time to knock them up. Some people find this much easier to do than others, namely, those who are naturally light on the left foot at the top of the swing. A thoroughly wet, heavy, muddy course—luckily for him he does not have to play on one—would not suit Braid, who is very heavy on his left foot. On such a course I should back Ray or Mitchell or Vardon against him, because it comes easy to them to be light on the left and hit the ball up.

I said that on good ground I recommended all players to play push-shots with their iron clubs, but I do not succeed in teaching all my pupils to do so. I admit that there are a good many players who never can manage it. They cannot master the knack of balancing themselves properly for the stroke. If they can't, they can't, and there is no use in trying beyond a certain point to make them. They had much better be left to swing their iron clubs more or less as they

ments are altogether beyond the reach of the ordinary; have learned to swing their wooden ones, and make the best of it. With such players I find a general tendency to pull their iron shots. In the first place, they are inclined to address the ball with the face of the club not sufficiently open, and then, too, they let that right hand of theirs come whipping round at the last moment. I always rub it into them as hard as I can that they are to keep the blade of the club open. I also find that I can help them to stop hooking by getting them to stand more in front of the ball. For the man who finds that he must "swing" his iron shots and not "push" them, I think these two things are the best aids to straightness.

The mashie-niblick has come into almost universal use in the last few years, and is a very useful and important club. No golfer should be without one in his bag. You cannot get enough stop on the modern small heavy ball with the ordinary mashie, especially if the greens are hard; so there is nothing for it but to get a club that will do it for you. When such a mashie player as J. H. Taylor has had to take to a mashie-niblick, other people can hardly hesitate. They must want one.

There has been a great deal said lately about the ribbed clubs that are being used in America and can stop the ball so wonderfully dead. I heard Lawrence Ayton say the other day that in Jock Hutchison's shots played with his ribbed mashie-niblick the ball never runs forward at all. Perhaps I am too sceptical. I may be wrong, but I do not believe that the ribs have a great deal to do with it. My notion is

that it is the loft that does it. It is not so much the spin as the height that makes a ball stop, and I am inclined to think that the Americans, having to pitch on to very hard greens, have been compelled to play with more lofted clubs than we do, so that, for example, their mid-irons would correspond, as regards loft, with our mashies, and so on down the scale. However, we may know more about this later on.

At any rate here is the mashie-niblick. Let us see how to play with it. The stroke is not different in essentials from that with the mashie, but there are certain points worth remembering. The first is to shove the club back with the left hand—push it back from the left shoulder. And remember particularly here again what I have quoted elsewhere from Sir Walter Simpson, that the left arm is to be regarded as part of the club. Whatever you do, don't pick up the club with the right hand, for that is fatal. I have said this same thing about not letting the right hand take charge over and over again. I said it several times about driving and you may be very tired of it, but I shall say it again nevertheless. I often think, no matter what the shot, what a pity it is we cannot keep the right hand completely off the club to begin with, and start the backward movement of the club solely with the left hand and then switch the right hand on to it. If we could do that we should not get that feeling of tension in the wrong place, and we should miss far fewer shots.

This pushing of the club back with the left hand ought to mean that the club goes back fairly close to the ground. But in any case I recommend you to

make a special resolution: "Hug the ground." If you do that on the way back you will be able to let the natural loft on the face of the club do the work and get the ball into the air. If you pick up the club sharply with too much right hand you cannot do that.

Remember, too, always to keep the blade of the club open. In the chapter on "My own Game," I describe how I often find myself going back unconsciously to my old style in playing pitches and letting the right hand climb over the left. That style came naturally to me, because I began to play on a place where there was very little to pitch over. Wherever they are bred I think this climbing-over movement of the right hand comes naturally to most people, but it is not a good plan with the mashie-niblick because it obviously has a tendency to shut the blade of the club. (Therefore, keep the blade open, push back with the left, and hug the ground.) Those seem to me to be the three main points to remember.

The niblick is next-door neighbour to the mashie-niblick, and I will say just a very little about getting out of bunkers with it. If the ball is lying well in sand and you want to get all the distance you can, you will obviously try to hit it clean. There is normally a face of some height in front of you, and it is essential to make the ball rise quickly. In order to do this you want to get your weight well back on your right foot and hit the ball a quick glancing blow from right to left. In other words, you hit rather across and cut it up and out.

In that which is known as the "explosive shot"—where you take a greater or less degree of sand with



the ball—the best model is undoubtedly James Braid. Nobody that I know can play it quite as well as he does. The rest of us seem to be lighter on the left foot than he is in playing the shot, and we are a little inclined by comparison to fall away and back at the finish of it. Braid seems to go right through with the shot with a tremendous heave forward, and he can shift more sand than any one else. I believe in being heavy on the left foot at the top of the swing in this stroke. You must not take up your stance with too much weight forward. Get the weight pretty well on the right foot in the address: be heavy on the left at the top and, once at the top, shut your teeth and crash into it.

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## *Chapter VII.* *Play It*

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## *The Spoon and How to*

I BELIEVE that I am supposed to be a fairly good player with my spoon, and it is certainly a club of which I am extremely fond. I would go so far as to say that it is one which on an inland course no player should be without. This is particularly the case on muddy courses, and at certain times of the year a very large percentage of inland courses are muddy.

There are different sorts of spoons with different degrees of loft on their faces. The one that I use I should call a mid-spoon. It is a good deal less lofted than the baffy-spoons which are very fashionable to-day. It is essential that the club should have a shallow face, and personally I am all in favour of the rounded sole. The spoon seems to me a distinctly easier club for the average golfer to play with than a cleek or an iron. It is easier for him to swing, because he can take a full swing with it. It is a more upright club than the brassy. The player stands nearer to his ball, and so naturally the swing is a bit more upright also.

The spoon is a club with which a very great deal can be done by the man who is a real master of it. Mr. Hilton, for instance, has an extraordinary command over the club, and can do a variety of things with it; but then he has always been an extraordinarily clever player, and many of his accomplish-

golfer. Mr. Hilton, by the way, once lost a Championship, that at Prestwick in 1898, by hesitating between his faithful spoon and an iron that he did not know very well. He took the iron, went into the famous Himalayas at the fifth hole, took eight to that one short hole, and then finished third, one stroke behind Willie Park and two behind Harry Vardon.

The ordinary golfer does not, in fact, try to do anything very subtle or out of the common with a spoon. He will often, if he is prudent, use it instead of his brassy through the green when the lies are soft and heavy, as he has thus a far better chance of picking up the ball. Apart from that, when he is at his own proper range from the green with the spoon, he just stands up and tries to hit the ball truly and is very glad if he can do so. In the case of many players this is probably the wisest course, and the fewer tricks they try the better.

Of course, however, for those who can do it and are ambitious, there is plenty more to learn, and in particular the stroke in which the ball is cut up to the hole. This is *the* shot with the spoon. The player must think about hitting the ball an ascending blow, and in order to do that he must be light on his left foot at the top of the swing. I have, of course, said this before in dealing with the difference between a descending and an ascending blow, but I will say it again. The pivoting should be to some extent restricted: that is, the player must stop his left shoulder—just a little and not too much—and not allow it to come round quite so freely as it would with a brassy. The finish of the swing must also be a little more under



ADDRESS



AT THE TOP OF THE SWING



BEGINNING TO COME DOWN



THE FINISH

DUNCAN PLAYS A SHOT WITH HIS DRIVING IRON



#### ADDRESS

With plenty of weight on the right foot.



#### AT THE TOP

The weight has come forward on to the left foot



#### THE FINISH

DUNCAN PLAYS A HALF SHOT WITH HIS MASHIE



DUNCAN PLAYS A HALF PUSH SHOT WITH THE MID-IRON



DUNCAN PLAYS A SEVENTY YARD PITCH WITH THE MASHIE NIBLICK



control. I am conscious in playing this shot that I do control my finish in some degree: I do not lash out quite freely, but it is an impalpable thing which cannot be exactly described. It is a feeling that the player must have rather than any precise thing that he must do; and indeed, in trying to do the various things that I have suggested in playing this shot, he must be particularly careful not to exaggerate them. One is always apt to exaggerate any piece of advice given one at golf, and I think this is especially so in a stroke which differs from the straightforward shot in a number of small ways none of which are very strongly marked. Generally speaking, when playing any kind of spoon shot I am playing more "within myself" than with other wooden clubs, and that is the feeling which the player must aim at.

I am sometimes asked how my spoon shots compare for distance with my cleek shots. I suppose that my average ordinary spoon shot goes just about as far as I hit with a cleek, that is, when I hit out really hard and freely with a cleek. On the other hand, when I really have a go with my spoon I can leave my cleek shot behind.

The most thoroughgoing spoon player in the professional ranks is, I suppose, Sandy Herd, for he does not carry a cleek in his bag. He is a real artist with a spoon, and can do more or less what he wants with it. During the last year or so I have noticed Taylor carrying a spoon and playing some beautiful shots with it. I fancy that it spares him some trouble, and saves him perhaps from hitting hard with a driving iron. I think some of his admirers don't quite like



to see him playing with a spoon because they get less chance of enjoying his iron play, but, much as I admire his play with irons, I don't think he has done himself any harm with a spoon. I was under the impression that I had never seen Taylor use a spoon till about a year ago, but Mr. Darwin tells me that he used one which he called his "Toby" as long ago as 1909 at Deal, when he won the Championship there, and no doubt he is right. So presumably he takes to it on and off when he feels in the mood for it.

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## *Chapter VIII. On the Importance of the Waggle*

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It may seem absurd to devote a separate chapter, even if only a very little one, to the waggle, which is a mere preliminary to the stroke, but I maintain that there is a good deal in waggling, though I don't do very much of it myself. I know that when I was a small boy I and my fellow caddies would devote quite a long time to waggling and imitating other people's waggles without ever swinging our clubs. You can see the same thing going on round any caddie shed to-day. I really believe we thought the waggle more important than the swing. There perhaps we were wrong, but it is important, and it is a firm belief of mine that as you waggle so you swing.

You have only to look at the next few golfers you meet on the course to see the truth of this. Take, for instance, the man who has what I call a "flash" waggle, with exaggerated wrist and knee work in it, just such a waggle in fact as we boys used to practise. You know at once what kind of a swing his will be—a florid swing, nice enough to look at, possibly with lots of wrist in it but no real punch. Or look at the player who waggles by aiming stiffly backwards and forwards behind the ball. There will be no wrist in his swing, nor any speed nor any pivoting. It will be all tension and stiffness. Again, there are some

who, after settling well down to address the ball, pull themselves up to their full height in their waggle as if they were looking at the surrounding country. The result is that they lift themselves up in the course of their swing. I could give many other instances. Some people let their right hands come open and away from the left as they waggle; others let the right elbow move backwards and forwards with something like the action of a piston, and you will see these same blemishes reproduced in their swings.

I have seen it laid down in books exactly how a waggle should be made. It is said, I think, that the club-head should describe something like the figure eight in the air. I do not believe in this. I ask nobody to make a particular pattern in the air. All I want to begin with is that there should be nice free wristwork in it. But there is one kind of freedom that is all wrong, and it is very frequently seen. It consists in that opening of the right hand which I mentioned before. Now when you address the ball—I assume the overlapping grip—the pad at the base of your right thumb is pressed firmly against your left thumb which is down the shaft. There it ought to stay throughout your swing. I believe this is very important indeed. I always think that it is one of the great merits of Harry Vardon's methods that he follows this rule so thoroughly. Look at him when he is going to play an iron shot and you will see that he seems almost to screw one hand into the other. His grip looks and is perfectly firm. You will never see any daylight between that right pad and that left thumb of his. Now if you keep your hands well

together in your waggle, it will make it far easier for you to do so in the swing. A great many golfers have the habit of partially opening the right hand in the waggle without being conscious of it. That is why I am so emphatic about looking out for this fault. I have had a player come to me, for the time being utterly incapable of hitting a shot, and found that it was entirely due to this opening of the right hand which had crept first into his waggle and then into his swing.

There is another point that wants watching. I have said elsewhere that the golfer's body should in the course of the swing take up no more than the space which it originally occupied at the time of the address. The same remark applies to the waggle. This is of course the ideal. Perhaps nobody quite attains to it, and the player must not think so much of it as to get cramped; but there should certainly be no superfluous body movement, and particularly no drawing up of the body.

Finally, the waggling process should not take too long. All players cannot get ready to play their shots at the same place, and it is no good forcing yourself into a method too hurried for you, but it cannot do any good to hang over the shot beyond a reasonable time.

I BELIEVE the original story about putting for one's living comes from North Berwick, when David Grant—himself a wonder with a putter—turned round on some one who was knocking the ball into the hole from all parts of the green and said, "If ye had tae keep a wife an' six bairns ye widna putt like that." But I doubt if having to putt well in order to live respectably makes much difference. It is the one department of the game where the handicap man can be as efficient as the plus man. I remember well when Mr. Walter Travis won the Amateur Championship at Sandwich, beating Mr. Blackwell in the final. I don't suppose more extraordinary putting has ever been seen in a competition which lasted so long. On the Maiden green in the afternoon Mr. Travis missed a short one. Perhaps it may have been about two yards, and one very agitated spectator exclaimed, "Thank God, he is not infallible." The Americans last year by the aid of Mr. Gardner were very near repeating Mr. Travis's win, but I am patriotic enough to believe that, although they have now some very fine players, until they send across another golfer like Mr. Travis who can putt well for a week, they will not quite succeed in winning our Amateur Championship. In match play there is nothing more disconcerting than your opponent holing putts from yards off,

especially if this sort of thing lasts for long. If the Amateur event were a seventy-two hole affair of score play, like the Open, I should then think that America, with players of the class of Messrs. Evans, Jones, and Ouimet, would have a wonderful chance.

According to Harry Vardon, American green-keepers are not cutting the greens so close as we do on this side. There is water laid on at most of their courses, and so they have what would be termed slow greens. Naturally these are easier to putt on than fast ones. These slow greens are not going to be good for American golfers in their invasions of our courses, as coming off slow greens on to fast ones is the very deuce; but of course in America there has to be a good thick bottom on the putting greens for fear of their being burned up by the heat. There is nothing that scares a good putter more than seaside greens that have lost all trace of their natural colour, where you can see the hole but no line to it, and the ground is polished with the sliding of those who have gone before.

St. Andrews I find the best test of putting, for by the time you have played your second or third round the green has become so slippery that it takes a brave man all his courage to go up and hit a three-yard putt firmly enough to give the 'back of the hole a chance: and yet this has to be done to keep the ball on the line. I know of only one good putter who drops the ball into the hole; most good putters give the back of the hole a chance.

If there is a conversation about good putters and Abe Mitchell is there, he will have it that hardly any one

is a better putter than I am. It is very nice of him to say this, as it gives me lots more confidence than I should otherwise have. I remember that once Vardon, Taylor, Braid, and I were journeying from Prestwick, where Vardon had just won the 1914 Championship, to Turnberry. I was accounting to Taylor for my failure in the Championship. Putting had been my trouble. I really had been bad, as a matter of fact. I used my mid-iron to putt with for most of the last round. Taylor, always sympathetic, said, "But you are one of the best putters in the world." I half believed him, and putted well all that day at Turnberry. Confidence in oneself has a great deal to do with successful putting.

I started to swing a golf club when I was nine years of age, but it was not until I went to the Timperley Golf Club, eleven years afterwards, that I began to learn how to hit the ball with a putter. Sometimes I could knock the ball into the hole after a fashion with a cleek, but I had no method. Perhaps that still may be said of me. But really I did practise putting. When I went to Timperley I followed Tom Simpson, who left a few old heads amongst other rubbish there. One of the heads was an ordinary cleek which must have had at least a dozen shafts in it, judging from the look of the hose. Anyhow, my clubmaker put in another and made the head more upright, and that has been my putter ever since. I have tried a few real putters in the meantime, but I always fall back on the converted cleek. It's a funny thing about my putting, but the quicker I putt the better I can hole them. When my courage is gone, I am looking at the line

longer than usual and the actual stroke is slower. But that's only my own particular method: I would not say it would necessarily suit other people. If you are not a "first sighter" take your time, but I don't see why you should look at the line from both sides of the hole. There may be method in this madness, but it should not be part of your regular game. You should be able to see everything by looking from the ball to the hole. I think this is necessary, and yet how often do you see the average golfer neglect it. I suppose that he thinks his handicap does not warrant this procedure; but every one should have a look at his putt, if only because he will very likely have to wait on the next tee.

Putting can be learned just like everything else, and it all depends upon the pupil, and, of course, upon his instructor, how well he learns. We hear of putting being an inspiration, that a putter must be born and not made, and various other excuses for bad putters. Inspired putting occurs on one of those days when you win your match about the twelfth hole and, after you have finished, your partner reckons up that you have only had twenty-two shots with your putter. One putt on each of the fourteen greens and two putts on each of the other four was the record at Timperley when I was there, but I didn't do it.

In order to be a consistently good putter a player must have a fine touch. This may be a gift and would, I suppose, be classed among the attributes of the born putter. I quite admit that if you are heavier-handed than another man, he has the making of a better putter than you. A good instance of this is the case of



Braid and Ray. Ray has the finer touch and is rated the best putter of the two. And yet for a time Braid was one of the best putters in the country. But he had to practise a lot in order to get the confidence to make him so. At one time he had a bad habit of moving his body. I call it a bad habit, as I did the self-same thing when I was learning to putt. And yet again the late Tom Ball was a great putter who moved his body when putting. But Tom would have been a good putter in whatever way he did it, as he had naturally a nice touch and had also great courage. He was dead game and always gave the hole a chance. I have a great admiration for Taylor as a putter. He is not one of those opponents who one day hole them all over the green and the next day miss a few short ones. You always know just what he is going to do, as he is the most consistent two-per-green putter in the paid ranks. With the long ones he puts the ball a yard away from the hole, and he seldom misses the short one. Now and again he may hole a six-yarder, but it has to be an easy one and then you expect it, so that it is not such a shock. The fellow who worries you is he who gets round in thirty-six putts, but on six greens he takes three putts and on six he has only one. There is nothing more annoying than, after you have had a look at your opponent's putt and feel glad it isn't yours, to find him hole it. Your shorter one wants a bit of holing after that happens.

It is a strange thing that we know just how to do a thing at golf and yet we cannot do it. During 1919 I putted, shall I say, moderately well on an average, and yet I knew that, could I only do something differ-

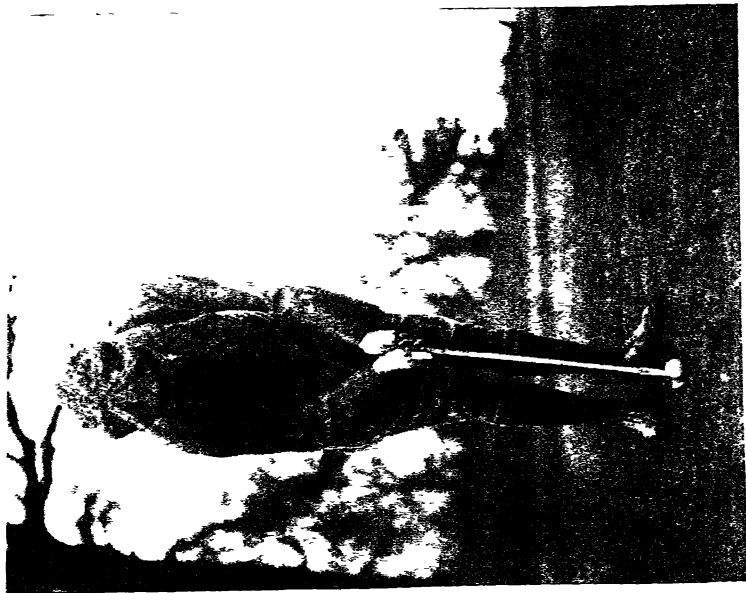
, I could improve. I knew through looking at an photograph, taken when I was putting well, that stance was not just the same as in the photograph. Practised for weeks, but I couldn't get my weight back on my heels until the following year, 1920. Then the knack of it suddenly came back, and I managed to keep it as long as it was required. I have lost it sometime through not playing, but I shall not take twelve months to find it this time. I have found this knack of keeping the weight back on the heels the best thing I have ever discovered about putting. The further back I can keep my weight the more stationary my body is and the better I putt. I have always been a good short putter, and the only way I can account for this is that I generally used to leave myself so much to do from the approach putt that something had to be done. Now that I have made myself really believe that I am a good approach putter, I suppose that what I call the law of average in putting will come into operation and I shall be missing a few short ones.

Nearly everybody calls Vardon a bad putter, but it would surprise a good many people if they were to see the trouble to count how many times he hits the ball with his putter as compared with other players. I always rate Vardon as the best approach putter we have, and through watching how he does it I have improved my own long putts. He has a trick of pressing the handle of the putter well forward just before the back-swing. Now what this does is to insure that the putter-head gets away first with the hands following it, and that is all that matters. It

is when the hands and the club-head get in a line that there is a locking of the left wrist at impact which prevents the ball being hit truly. Ray is a good putter, we know, but he often has bouts of this locking of the left wrist because his putter-head never leads unless he is very close to the hole. With the putter the head must be—from the moment you start to make the putt until impact—behind the hands. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether at any time during the stroke the putter-head should be in front of the hands. I believe that if I could really carry out these instructions I should putt better than I do, but it's fearfully difficult to keep the head behind the hands all the time.

There are two important factors in putting, to my way of thinking. One is to keep the body still and the best way to ensure this is to keep the weight back on the heels. The other is not to allow the left wrist to bend or, perhaps I should say, to allow the left wrist to bend as little as possible when taking the club back. I have often found myself looking at the putter-head going back and at the same time putting the short ones well. It is when you look at the hole before or just at the moment of impact that you putt badly.

Perhaps in saying that these are *the* two important things I have assumed a little too much as to the actual method of taking the putter backwards and forwards. I assumed that the club should be taken back with the left hand and the actual hitting done with the right. Perhaps a better word than take is push. The club should be pushed back with the left hand. The great danger is that of getting the left wrist too much bent in the course of this process. If you do this, the wrist



**DUNCAN PUTTING.**

Notice the grip of the right thumb straight down the shaft.



**JACK WHITE PUTTING.**

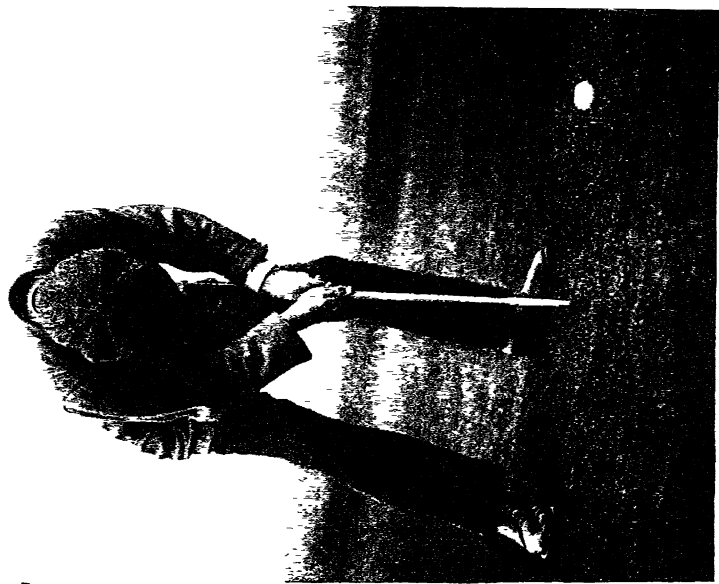
With his head woff down over the ball.





DUNCAN AT THE FINISH OF A PUTT.

The actual hitting is done with the right hand.



JACK WHITE AT THE FINISH OF A PUTT.

The head has been kept still and well down.



seems to get paralysed and the ball cannot be hit truly. There is no patent remedy for this disease. You must just take care not to bend the wrist too much, but keep it as stiff as you reasonably can. Of course you must not make yourself feel *too* stiff, for that is never a good plan in any stroke; but almost anything is better than getting that left wrist too much bent, for it is the very devil.

I have talked a good deal about the shut and the open blade in other strokes, and have been generally in favour of the open. In putting the blade should be shut. I do open the blade just a shade, but it is very little. If you will try the experiment I think you will see that to open the blade to any real extent makes putting terribly difficult. Turn the face of the putter away from the ball as you take it back, and see what chance you have of bringing it back accurately. Doesn't it look a very small one? It has got to come back exactly and precisely right or the ball must be either hooked or pushed out. Look at the photographs of Jack White putting and you will see very, very little of his blade open. Of course, in a long approach putt when the club is taken well away from the ball there must be rather more opening of the blade. That will come about naturally. Generally speaking, however, it is one of the secrets of putting to keep the blade shut.

I have often been told that in my approach putts the ball never looks as if it would get there, but it keeps on running and, if I have hit it right, it does get the distance. Where my putts, and for that matter a good many more players' putts are deceiving, is in...



the fact that the ball has been hit near its centre, which keeps it travelling. You can't talk of top spin in hitting a golf ball, but I am firmly convinced that hitting the ball near or above its centre is a better way to putt than to roll the ball or hit it with the putter-head going parallel with the ground. All good putters have the same trick of hitting the ball a slightly descending blow—in other words, putting on 'top.' A ball hit this way will hug the green better than one that has been hit below its centre, especially if it has been hit with a putter that has any loft on it. To hit below the centre with a lofted club makes the ball have a slight pitch on it, and it is more easily "kicked" off the line. One hears of drag on a putt, but when it is necessary to make a putt slow up it can only be done by hitting the ball on the heel of the club. A ball can be hit at the bottom that will show a suspicion of drag, but a club with more loft than a putter, such as a mid-iron, has to be used. Drag cannot really be applied with a putter. It is a bad shot to try for. A sounder method is to hit as near in a line with the club-shaft as possible. This has a wonderful slowing-up effect. I have always been sorry the Royal and Ancient prohibited the Schenectady putter, as I am a great believer in hitting opposite the shaft, and here was a golf club with which any one could apply this method without any trouble. The club was so constructed that it was difficult to do anything else. When Mr. Walter Travis won at Sandwich there was a tremendous run on the American putter, but A. H. Toogood was the only player of note who got it to work. Only one of these instruments

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remains at Hanger Hill and, sad to relate, it has been converted by the dressing-room attendant, who by the way has never hit a golf ball in his life, into a coal-hammer.

A good deal of what I have said in this book comes very decidedly under the head of advanced instruction. Some of it may be difficult to understand. It has certainly been difficult to express. In this chapter I am going to be more elementary. I am going to try to put down something of what I should say to an actual beginner who came to me as a pupil. I do not claim that all my methods of teaching are necessarily right, but such as they are I will try to explain them.

I will imagine, therefore, that I have got a complete novice, and that I am going to teach him to drive. For all I know it might possibly be better to begin at the other end of the game and start him close to the hole and work backwards, but I do not think that if I did so I should be a popular teacher. I can generally make a good guess, by looking at the pupil, whether he is likely to do any good at the game. One can always tell the natural athlete and also the man who will never be much of a hand at any game. However, to whichever class this pupil belongs, I shall begin in much the same way and ask him to bring his wooden club. Very likely this club is a brassy with a certain amount of loft on it, as beginners often buy only a few clubs, and in that case their wooden club is generally a fairly lofted brassy. But if it happens to be a driver, by all means let him begin

with that. There is no harm done by making things fairly difficult to start with.

I begin by making him take hold of the club with his left hand in such a way that when he looks straight down the shaft he can see at least two knuckles. If he gets the grip of this hand correctly, the right hand generally fits fairly well into its place. There is some inclination to get the right hand too much under, because he feels that this gives him power, but "No," I say to him, "you will have all the power you want by holding at the roots of the fingers of both hands, if you will only believe it." I always teach the overlapping grip whether the pupil is old or young, a man or a woman. I know it is said that it does not suit ladies, and that they have not strong enough fingers for it. I have also heard golfers, and very good golfers too, say that they cannot manage this grip because their fingers are not long enough. Personally I do not believe in any of these reasons. I think that any one can learn to do it, and that it is the best grip. Therefore, any one beginning the game at the very beginning had much better adopt it.

Having taken hold of his club the pupil next takes his stand and addresses an imaginary ball, and the first thing that I nearly always notice is that he stands up too straight. So I tell him to sit down to it a little and get his weight back on to his heels. I don't worry him very much about his knees, but like him to stand easily with a little give in them. I fancy that one of the reasons for this standing up too much is that the beginner thinks the club must be very carefully placed so that the whole sole of it is flat on the ground. This

is quite wrong. I am a great believer in the hands being well down and, consequently, the nose of the club being a little cocked up in the air. I know that when I am driving my best the nose of my club is well cocked up. To have the hands down is to give the club-head every chance of beginning to go back properly—that is, to go round and inwards and not to be pushed out to the right. Another very common mistake in taking up the stance is laboriously to square the shoulders instead of allowing the right shoulder to be lower than the left. This is its natural and proper place, since the right hand is below the left, and any one who begins the game young gets this naturally correct. This is not so with grown-up learners, and I have to rub it in to them to get the right shoulder down and get more weight on the right foot.

The next stage is that the learner should waggle a few times. I show him what a waggle is like, and try to get him to do it with some freedom of wrist. If, as often, he is very stiff, I say to him, “Now then, get a break in your wrist.” So many people do not seem to realise that they have got wrist-joints.

Having waggled and got a little freedom and some feel of his club, his next step will be a swing at the imaginary ball. I show him, of course, by actual example, how to do it, and explain something of it to him in words. I say nothing whatever about the turning over of the wrists, which is as a rule the first piece of preliminary instruction in books. I do not think it is necessary. If a player is holding properly with his left hand with those two knuckles showing, as much turning movement as is necessary will come naturally.

I do not find that beginners have generally any difficulty in opening the face of the club, except that now and then there is one who is inclined to grip too fiercely with the right hand too much under and so shut the face. The chief point that I insist on in words is the movement of pivoting. Briefly, what I say is this: "A half turn of your right shoulder, a half turn of your right hip, and get your left shoulder moving."

When he actually begins to swing the club I try to make the learner take a three-quarter swing to start with, and then gradually lengthen it a little by means of more pivoting. With beginners, as with champions, there is a natural tendency for the strong right hand to take charge too early in the up-swing and spoil it. If a pupil suffers very badly from this I make him put his right hand in his pocket and do some one-handed swings with his left hand, and this, as it may be called, back-handed shot is often very useful in helping to produce some smoothness and rhythm.

All this has taken me some time to write down, but in real life it does not take very long. In point of fact it takes about a quarter of an hour, which is quarter of a lesson, and at the end of that time I generally let my pupil have a go at a real ball. It depends, of course, on how he shapes. Some people take longer to get a rudimentary notion of the swing than others, but in the case of a normally promising pupil I start him on a real ball at about this time, and I generally have half a dozen balls and tee them for him one after another. The average result in my experience is this: three or four tops, one fair hit, and one or two slices. The topped shots are usually produced by swaying,

the slices by insufficient pivoting, and the one fairly good shot possibly by chance.

Gradually the tops become fewer and the slices more frequent. The slicing nearly always comes from the same cause, namely, that the player does not pivot enough. In order to make him pivot properly I sometimes resort to exaggeration. I tell him that at the top of the swing he ought to be able to see the club-head and half of the shaft, and then get him to try to do so in a practice swing. This sounds as if it meant a very long swing. As a matter of fact, it does not, but it does mean a rather exaggerated pivot. I find it a good plan for making the learner get well round with his shoulder. Another plan is to tell him to point the club-head at me at the top of his swing. Of course I stand in such a position that, if he is to do as he is told, he must bring his shoulder well round—and round he does come with a vengeance. There is sometimes great merit in exaggeration.

By this time no doubt I have got to the end of the first hour's lesson, and probably some way into the second. Exactly how much I try to teach a learner at once must, of course, depend a good deal on him and how he gets on. In nearly every case, however, I find that after the very first stages the thing that I have to rub in for all it is worth is pivoting. It is pivot, pivot, pivot all the time. If the pupil will keep his hands low he has at any rate a chance of pivoting properly, but his hands will come up. Then out goes the club to the right and he cannot turn properly. I always tell him to allow his body to occupy in pivoting the same space and no more than it did in his address.

This is really a piece of more advanced instruction, but I find that it often helps the beginner to get the right mental picture of the movement.

A great many people think that they are pivoting when in fact they are only screwing round on the ball of the left foot. This is a bad fault. When it is at all exaggerated it brings the left heel into such a position at the top of the swing that it is almost facing in the direction in which the player is aiming. Now, by the time he hits the ball that heel has got to get back to the position from which it started. That is a comparatively long job, much too long to be comfortably managed in the space of time occupied by the down-swing. Of course the player does not manage it, with the result that his heel is in the wrong place and his body contorted at the moment he hits the ball. Never let the heel get past the line of the toe: that is a golden rule, and can never be infringed with impunity.

As regards this matter of footwork, I ought perhaps to have said something before now as to stance. I teach my pupils the square stance, in which I believe most strongly, and there are two other rules that I always try to make them obey. The right foot is to be at right angles with the line of direction; the left foot it to be turned outwards at an angle of forty-five degrees. I think it is important to get that right foot at right angles, because it stops swaying, or at any rate makes it much more difficult. You have only to try a swing to see that this is so. It may, to begin with, make pivoting rather harder. If the right toe is a little turned out the body seems to turn rather



more easily, but the advantage of stopping the sway more than counterbalances this, and pivoting with the foot at right angles is only a matter of practice.

There is one other point that I nearly always have to tell a beginner. It is not quite easy to explain. The beginner looks squarely down on to the top of the ball. That is not the way in which a good player looks at the ball except upon the putting green. Observe any good golfer and you will see that he has his head a little on one side. He seems to be leaning it a little to the right. Whatever may be the exact reason of this, experience proves it to be right. Perhaps it makes it a little easier to begin the pivot and let the club start round in the proper direction. It comes naturally to an imitative boy, but not to a grown-up beginner. To him it has to be pointed out, and it certainly is a help to him.

I generally give three lessons of an hour each with the wooden club before I touch irons, and I never teach wooden and iron clubs on the same day. I absolutely refuse to do it. When the time for irons arrives I start my beginner with a mid-iron. I don't tell him anything about half shots and push shots. He is to hit the ball, within reasonable limits, as hard as he can—an honest, full smack. I say to him, "Now the only difference I want you to make between this shot and the shot you have been playing with your driver is just this. When you get near the top of your swing, add a little tension to your left arm and wrist and hand." This has the effect of making him take a rather shorter and tauter swing.

I don't know precisely why, but the beginner is

particularly prone when he has an iron club to give a jump and lift his body upwards. It is certainly more noticeable than with wooden clubs. To cure this the best plan is to try to make him get his weight well on to his left big toe. With this mid-iron shot, be it understood, he is not worrying his head about an ascending or a descending blow. He is just trying to hit the ball. The leaning to the left in the up-swing with its consequent transference of weight and descending blow (these things make up really all there is in the "push shot") come at a later stage, and I have talked about them elsewhere.

After two lessons with the mid-iron, I go on to the mashie. Here the beginner has something quite fresh to tackle. So far he has been playing more or less a full shot. Now I leave the full shot behind, and teach from a half to a quarter shot. Moreover, here I do take him straight away to the descending blow. It is to be remembered that by this time he has had several lessons, is getting familiar with the feel of a club, and is not so elementary as he was.

The first thing I impress on him is that the club must to a considerable extent hug the ground on the way back, and that the loft on the club-face will get the ball up into the air for him. He is not to do anything to help it. Nearly always he wants to pick the club up abruptly with the right hand: to check this, one-handed exercise with the left hand is very useful. As I said, I want him straightway to hit down on the ball a descending blow, which is in all ordinary circumstances the right shot with a mashie, and the best phrase I know, with which to make him see what is

wanted, is "Lean against the club." That will get him with his weight well forward on to the left foot as his club is going up, and put him into the right position to hit down. It is a phrase that he ought to bear in mind long after he is a beginner. When I miss a mashie shot myself, it is generally because I have not remembered to lean against the club, and I am sure this is true of hundreds of other golfers.

On the same day as I start a pupil with a mashie, I give him a turn at putting. I am sure it is important for him to begin under a teacher's eye and not at his own sweet will, even though there may be more different ways of hitting a ball into the hole than there are of hitting it successfully with other clubs. Personally I putt with a cleek, but to a beginner who has no predisposition one way or the other I recommend an aluminium putter. It makes for more smoothness and more of a pendulum motion, and these are two valuable assets. To encourage this smoothness I always teach a pupil to roll the ball up to the hole with his putter. I know that elsewhere I have said that good putters seem to me to hit the ball a slightly descending blow upon the putting green. I stick to that opinion, but it is one for advanced players, not for golfing babes and sucklings. To think of rolling the ball towards the hole is to play a smooth shot with the sole of the putter keeping close to the ground, hitting the ball beneath its centre, and that, I think, is the safest plan for the ordinary person. The beginner is inclined to pick the club up on the way back with his right hand—that right hand has a deal of mischief to answer for on the way back, whatever the stroke—

and he is less likely to do this if he concentrates his mind on rolling the ball.

The three main rules that I try to instil are: (1) Shove the club back with the left hand, (2) Hit with the right hand, (3) Keep the body still; and the greatest of these is the last. Everybody falls into the habit of moving his body in putting at some time or other, and the beginner is particularly given to it. He cannot begin too early or too earnestly to try to keep it still.

IN the last chapter I imagined a complete beginner coming to me and asking to be taught golf. This time I will imagine another and more common case, that of the golfer, more or less mature, who comes to me in a state of despair and says, "I'm slicing everything," or "I am hitting all my pitches on the socket," or whatever else his particular trouble may be.

Golfers who are thus for the moment unhappy I may roughly divide into two classes. First of all, there is the man who had not got what I call the "ball sense." He probably never could or wanted to play games when he was a boy, and he has taken to golf when he is middle-aged because his doctor told him he must. He will never make a player: he has no instinct for the game and no power of balancing himself—a very, very important factor in playing games; still, in his way he enjoys it and wants to play as well as he can. The most that can be done for him is to make the best of a bad job. Nevertheless, a great deal can be done to help him, and I have had plenty of experience in trying to do so.

First of all there is something to be done for a player of this type by artificial means—that is, by having his club adapted to his weaknesses. He nearly always is inclined to slice, and this I would counteract by making his club with a hook. With a young ath-

letic pupil I would not do that. I would not give in to his weakness, but would teach him to swing properly so that he did not slice. But in this case that is past praying for, and the hooky club if it does not get rid of the slice will reduce it and give him confidence. Also I would give the player a whippy club in order to give him a little more length. He will never be able to hit hard, and the artificial device of the springy shaft will make up a little for this deficiency.

I find that there is a peculiar kind of swing which is best suited to this rather feeble kind of player. It is first a fairly short one, because as a rule the further he is away from the ball the worse he balances himself. Next, it is what I think of as a "round and up" swing. I do not know if that will convey anything to other people. I mean that the swing should begin by being a flat one, with the club going well round and pretty close to the ground. That does away with the strong natural desire to pick the club straight up with the right hand. But this player cannot complete the swing on these lines. He cannot get round enough and pivot freely. If he tries he will swing himself completely off his balance. So after the club has gone round a little way I teach him to take it up and then stop. In short, it is a swing that begins by being flat, then becomes upright, and then stops fairly short. It is not a powerful style or one for the man who can ever hope to be a good player, but it will produce a certain amount of steadiness, and the player is more likely to balance himself decently well. In the case of a player to whom I teach this stop-gap method of driving I impress on him the fact that he ought to spe-

cialise in the short game. There is no reason why he should not pitch and putt, especially putt, pretty well. Let him be content with short but reasonably steady driving, and then learn to pitch and putt. If he does, he may come to beat a good many people who ought to be beating him.

Perhaps no one of my readers will like to think that these remarks apply to him. I hope they do not, and I will now come to the normal, reasonably athletic player who is for the time being in a bad way either from one fault or another. He is more often worried about his driving than about anything else: so I will begin with that, taking the commoner golf faults or diseases, whichever you like to call them, in turn, and suggesting some remedies that are generally effective.

Suppose, then, that this golfer comes to me and says, "I can't do any good at all. I'm hooking like blazes and smothering the ball." Of course there are various things that may produce hooking, but the chief one that I look for first is the opening of the right hand and lifting the right elbow high in the air at the top of the swing. I am not sure that I am not putting the cart before the horse. I think it is rather the lifting up of the right elbow which tends to force the hand open. The result is this. Feeling that his right hand is open at the top and that he has lost control, the player makes a grab at the club on the way down. He succeeds in catching it, but by thus seizing it he shuts the face of the club. When he hits the ball it is with the club-face turned over and the nose turned in, and of course he smothers the ball. This is a trick it is quite easy to fall into, especially if one is tired.

At the end of last season when I was dead stale I had a turn of it. I could not stop that right elbow going up, and round went every ball to the left. A great many people make it more fatally easy for themselves than they need by opening the right hand as they waggle. Then they are naturally inclined to do it as they swing. Those are especially given to it who, while they are waggling, have the right elbow working backwards and forwards quite clear of the body. Let them resolutely keep the right elbow well into their ribs as they waggle. There will be much less tendency for the hand to open or the elbow to go up. I have sometimes seen this cure work like a charm. You will never see a good player with that right elbow wandering away from the body in the address.

Now suppose a still commoner case. The despairing one says, "I'm slicing everything. I feel I'm going to before I start. I *can't* keep the ball out of the rough on the right." It is very long odds indeed that he is not pivoting enough. In fact in nearly every case of slicing the trouble boils down to just this—lack of pivoting. The player won't start his swing with the turn of the left shoulder, and the more frightened he gets the less will that left shoulder do its office. He cannot, so to speak, "get round the corner" in his swing, with the result that at the top he is in such a position that he must come across the ball on the way down. The left shoulder is one constant sinner; the right hand is another, as I have dinned into my readers' ears right through the book. The two almost seem to conspire together. If the swing begins with the right hand taking charge, it is very difficult



for the left shoulder to come round properly. So let the slicer mind that shoulder and hand keep on pivoting.

Sometimes I find that slicing comes from the player being too heavy on his left foot. He starts with too much weight on it in the address. Then he does one of two things. Either he sways to the right to counteract it, or else he piles still more weight on to the left foot at the top of the swing. In either case he cannot turn properly and freely. The man who has too much weight on the left foot at the top of the swing constantly falls back on to his right foot at the finish. Very likely he attributes this habit of falling back to not having his weight enough forward. Of course he is exactly wrong in diagnosing his disease, and only makes it worse than ever by his remedy.

This habit of getting too much weight on the left is often caused by the player doing with his wooden club what he has been told to do with his irons. He is told to lean to the left and get his weight well forward in the up-swing when he is playing an iron shot. He finds that he plays his iron shots better in consequence, and jumps to the conclusion that this is the way to play all shots with all clubs. Not long ago a lady pupil of mine, a fairly good player, came to me very unhappy about her driving. About a month before I had given her some lessons in iron play, and now I found that she was trying to play all her drives like iron shots and getting far too much weight on her left foot. I could not get her out of this trick at first. So at last I told her to try to sway. This was a desperate remedy, but it acted well. She did not

really sway, although she thought she was doing so. What she did was to get lighter on the left foot, with the result that by the end of the hour she was swinging beautifully.

When a player is driving badly, whatever the particular fault he is committing, it is quite likely that he is taking his eye off the ball. But it does him no good to tell him so, or make him try hard to look at the ball. I don't believe in worrying about that. The thing to do is to search for the antecedent cause. One may be sure that he is doing something wrong in the earlier part of his swing that makes it almost inevitable that his eye should come off. The thing to do is to find out this something and get rid of it. When a man says to me in explanation of a bad shot, "I took my eye off," I say to him, "But didn't you do something at the very beginning of your swing that made you do it?" If only one can get to the top of the swing properly the eye won't come off. I can never remember having taken my eye off unless there was something wrong on the way to the top.

I am not treating the old maxim, "Keep your eye on the ball," very respectfully, and I am equally disrespectful to another, "Follow through." I don't bother my own head or other people's about the follow-through. The club can't help coming through, quite as much as there is any necessity for, if the swing is properly made. Personally, on the days when I am hitting my best, I am conscious of less coming through than usual. I wish I could hit the ball with as little follow-through as Abe Mitchell. Many people come through too much and think too much about it. Of

course I may be wrong, but I never teach my pupils anything about following through.

When golfers come to me with tales of woe about their iron play, the thing they most often complain of is that the ball is constantly finishing to the left of the pin. This is because they will try to hit the ball instead of pushing it. Of course I mean "pushing" in the sense in which we talk of a push shot. They are not bold enough, or have not faith enough to do what they know they ought to do. They won't get enough weight on the left foot, and they let their hands fall behind. The natural effect, of this is to shut the blade of the club. It reaches the ball with the nose a little turned in, and the ball flies to the left. I tell them to shove the hands a couple of inches forward when they are addressing the ball; but I add, "For Heaven's sake don't move the weight with the hands." The weight is to be moved on to the left foot, not in taking up the stance but as the club goes up. I know this is not an easy thing to do, but it has got to be done. I find it quite difficult to make myself believe that I can thus get my weight forward in playing quite short shots, but I play them best on the days when I really do believe it. A vast number of mashie shots (some of my own included) are "fluffed" through this lack of weight on the left foot at the top.

A very common fault in playing mashie shots is that the player tries to scoop the ball up into the air. This he does by a horrible bend of the left wrist on the way up, and a corresponding bend of the right wrist coming down. This bending of the left wrist going up is naturally followed by an opening of the right

hand. Indeed, it is all wrong from beginning to end. At Hanger Hill there is a hole on a terrace close to the club-house. The ball has to be pitched up on to the terrace, and at this hole I see lots and lots of players scooping away at the ball as if for dear life.

Finally, there is one painful and sometimes paralyzing disease with iron clubs that can attack champions as well as long handicap players. Needless to say it is called "socketing." This generally comes from having the left wrist locked. The player gets this wrist bent. He will not carry the left wrist boldly enough and far enough back. He gets his left wrist and also the club-face too much into the position which they should occupy in putting. My cure I express thus: "Shove the club from the left shoulder, and get the blade of the club open."

Occasionally there is a different cause. The player having got his left heel off the ground does not get it back to the ground by the time he hits the ball. I have seen very good players occasionally fall into this habit, and it is worth watching for.

MR. DARWIN asks me to say a little about my own game, and I will go back as far as the time when I first started to swing an ancient wooden club on the old links in Aberdeen. In those days any one could play free of charge; now I believe there is a fee of threepence per round. We were better off than, say, the North Berwick or St. Andrews boys for the reason that we had plenty of space. We could learn to drive without interfering with any one playing a round, and we were always driving. As a matter of fact, a wooden club was the only club I had for three or four years. Then I was fortunate enough to be given an old-fashioned mid-iron which I used when hanging around the club-house waiting for a caddying job. Here the ground was dead flat, and I got into the way of knocking the ball down. We had about six holes, the longest about thirty yards, and we would play for hours at them for pennies.

I must have played quite a time with my left hand below the right, and I was a very ordinary player then, but one day I received a lecture from a very good player which I took to heart. I changed my grip to the orthodox one, and very soon showed great promise. Like a lot more of my countrymen I crossed the Border. I've been back often since, though not for very long at a time. My game when I came south

nineteen years ago had three main characteristics: hitting the ball down as often as I could, hitting it hard, and taking about forty-two putts per round. I may add that I would "go up in the air" at any moment. I was not so likely to have a fight with myself when I had a flesh-and-blood opponent. My trouble was medal play, in which I often got annoyed when everything was not going just right, and so beat myself. In those days I had a half-finger, half-palm grip, an open stance and a flat swing. I could hit the ball further than I do now. My grip was stronger on account of my holding the club more in the palm, and my swing was more powerful: it was a flat one, and so there was more pivoting. And another thing perhaps made me longer then. I had not the experience to realise that half a dozen times off the line meant the loss of a few shots in the course of a round. I was always prepared to go on to the tee and try to knock the ball as far as I possibly could, but this will not do. If you will carefully watch golfers of experience, you will see that every now and again they pull out an extra twenty-five yards when it is required; at the other holes they are hitting well within themselves. All this kind of knowledge only comes with experience.

My first sight of the cracks was when I took a day off and went to Hoylake to see the Championship of 1902, which Sandy Herd won, using a Haskell ball. I had heard so much of Vardon, Braid, Taylor, and Herd that I went straight away and found Vardon. I must say he made a great impression on me, as he played in so totally different a manner from any one I had ever seen: I mean in regard to his style. Up

to then I had never seen any one able to balance himself with a swing as upright as Vardon's, and he did it so easily. There was no slogging about it: just perfect timing.

I was anxious to see how my brother Scots were doing; so I went after Braid, whom I found crashing into a "gutty." His caddy besides carrying a bag of clubs carried a box of balls. It appeared that Jimmy hit them so hard that he had them out of shape in a few holes. It was Braid's hard hitting that appealed to me more than anything in his game. Next I found J. H. Taylor playing with Tommy Renouf, and I certainly liked his style. Like Vardon he got to the green by the "All air route," and this was the great difference between the Scottish and English methods of playing. I saw Sandy Herd win with a ball of which the inside rubber could be seen; but though it was nearly split in half it was an easier ball with which to get the figures for the holes than a brand-new "gutty."

I came away from that Championship with lots of hopes, and at the same time convinced that my methods were not so good as I had thought they were. First of all, I had to learn to make my ball do more of its work in the air. Then all these champions, with the exception of that year's winner, adopted the overlapping grip. I had to learn that, and it so happened that this was made easier for me by the accident of my sticking a gouge half-way into the centre of my left hand. With this grip it took me at least six months to hit a ball without cut on it. With the adoption of the new grip my swing had become more

upright; my left wrist was consequently more under the shaft at the top, and I was keeping the ball in the air all right, but it did not stay there long enough. I gradually—it really took years—got rid of all the cut, but it was not until I adopted a square stance that I got back to my place on the course from the tee.

My next two lessons were from Mr. Hilton, who advised me to take a practice swing before playing a shot. I certainly was not in the habit of wasting much time. Indeed, one gentleman said of me, "Duncan won't miss his train through his putting." Mr. Hilton also advised me to keep my body still when I was putting, and to emphasise his good advice he instanced Jimmy Braid, pointing out that he used to sway his body in the days when he couldn't putt, but had become a good putter since keeping his body still. His putting "tip" I learned inside three years, but it took me until last year—that is to say about fifteen years—to carry out his first bit of advice.

During the Championship which Taylor won at Deal in 1909, I was staying with Vardon, and I happened to ask him what chances he had. He reckoned that if he struck a patch of decent putting he would have a chance, and he also said that I played too quickly to win. And he was quite right; but what he really meant, though he wouldn't say it, was that I would never win a championship until I became a lot more stable. All the same, two 80's on one day and "one under fours" on the next do not say much for my stability yet. He was a wise man who said, "It was not my good play that won, it was my opponent's bad play."



I said something just now of my preference for the "All air route" up to the hole. This is to be made easier this year, as I believe that most of the popular brands of balls are to be wound at a higher tension, which will make them more resilient and cause them to stay longer in the air. At the same time, a golfer who buys a ball for its durability, and incidentally its bunker-jumping properties, will still be able to get the soft ball. The good player has been handicapped for years by the construction of the ball, as naturally the manufacturers have catered for the majority who prefer a ball that does not cut readily, and a ball of this type must not be hard wound. But even with a little more help from the ball there will still be art in hitting one two hundred yards on to a green and making it stay there.

Now, to jump to another subject, there has recently been a competition running in a trade paper, the "P. G.," competitors being asked to vote as to who are the best players with driver, brassy, spoon, cleek, iron, mashie, niblick (the latter club being specially put in for Ray), and putter. Mitchell was voted the best from the tee, Braid with the brassy; Sandy Herd and myself had a fight for honours with the spoon, but I won by a vote. Vardon was the best with cleek and iron, Taylor the mashie, Ray the niblick, and Jack White the putter. If I had had a shot at the competition, I should have voted driver, Mitchell; wooden-club seconds up to the hole, Ray; cleek, Vardon; iron and mashie, Taylor; and Jack White, the putter. I think Mitchell the most consistently long driver to-day. Ray's long seconds up to the hole are best because of

the distances he gets out of all sorts of lies, and he is also able to stop them nearly where they drop. Vardon is the man for the cleek, because he has always stuck to it and has seldom used a spoon. Taylor is best with iron and mashie, because he can make the ball travel faster to its goal and stop as quickly as would a slower flying ball. I should choose White for the putter, because of his sound methods. I am such a great believer in the "All air route" that I have left out Braid and Herd. My reason is that every now and again they play shots in which, though the ball may go near its object, it is doing too much on the ground, and that makes for an element of luck. Naturally, when either of these players plays a run-up shot, the shot must be a possible one, otherwise he would pitch it; but I believe in keeping the ball clear of the ground if you can possibly do so.

I often shut the club-face off the tee when I wish to keep the ball down or get a little "draw," but nearly all my other shots are hit with the club-face open. A part of my game that has improved since 1913 is my mashie and mashie-niblick play. By that year I had come to the conclusion that there was less chance of error in Vardon's method of taking up the club, which is a two-handed business with very little turning or bending of the wrist. It is the nearest thing to a lift that a swing can be. At the same time, I like the way in which Taylor comes down on the ball, and I think a combination of the two is the "super method" of approaching. When I can "get it" I can put the ball pretty close to the hole. But it cannot always be done, for I often instinctively go back to my old style,

using a lot of wristwork on the up-swing, and allowing the right hand to climb over the left at impact, the natural way to one who has been reared on a course where the run-up shot is encouraged. A mashie and putter were the last two clubs to complete my set when I was a boy. I remember one of our local cracks going to a Championship which Taylor won, and coming back full of Taylor's wonderful "cut" mashie shots. Well, all us boys who had been running them up to the hole with an iron must now, of course, get a mashie. I got hold of an old-fashioned lofting iron, and we started to develop this "cut" shot. We could toss them up all right and make the ball break to the right; but like every one else we exaggerated, so that we got a bit of cut into every shot we played, and after a while went back to our old methods.

The truth of the matter is that Taylor does not hit the ball an inward glancing blow, which is the only way in which what we understand as the "cut" shot can be played. When Taylor plays an ordinary approach and the ball breaks to the right, he has not played a good one. He would much rather see that ball go straight on. The whole secret of Taylor's approaching is that he is always hitting the ball a straight descending blow with the blade as open as it is possible to have it. By hitting the ball down, and by having this open blade, he secures the maximum amount of under-spin. Now, the man who hits the ball a straight descending blow, and at impact allows the right hand to turn over, cannot get as much stop on as Taylor does; for the turning over of the right

hand tends to shut the blade, and the ball is hit nearer its centre instead of at the bottom.

A favourite shot of mine is a wooden-club shot up to the hole, or a full iron where it is possible to bang the ball up to the hole and make it stay there. I play this shot with the left wrist more under the shaft than it is in my tee shot: this opens the club-face, and so helps to get just a suspicion of cut on. I have also to be lighter on my left foot at the top of the swing so that I can strike the ball an ascending blow. By doing this and using the full amount of loft on the club-face, I can hit the ball as far below its centre as possible and so get height. Vardon and Ray both play this shot well, as their natural way of hitting a ball is to be light on the left foot at the top of the swing.

I was playing at Bournemouth the other day, and on the whole playing quite well. Going to the tenth my partner's caddie said to him, after I had put my drive just off the course on the right, "This gentleman would be a good player, sir, if he could only 'it 'em straight." When off the line I used generally to be so on the right-hand side, but lately it has been the other way. At the P.G.A. exhibition I picked up a driver made by Frank Frostick, and I have used it ever since. It has had a peculiar effect on my game in this one respect. The club has a decided hook, and though I drive well with it, I find myself in consequence of this hook standing too much in front of my ball for long seconds, whether it be with a wooden club or an iron. I have the greatest difficulty in getting my stance. Over and over again I feel myself too

much in front of the ball. Sometimes I have time to adjust my stance; at other times it is too late, and I find my ball on the left of the green. For many years now I have habitually used wooden clubs that tend to "lie away," with the result that, as I said, my ball when off the line used to be on the right of the course. To-day I find it more often on the left. Now this hooking is all against my idea of how to play golf, which is the "All air route," because a pulled ball tends to come down quickly, not having been hit as near the bottom as possible. Here I have been struggling with a dilemma, hoping to be able to get an extra few yards from the tee with the hooked driver and still be able to "hold up" my seconds; but I have come to the conclusion that I cannot do what I want often enough to make it pay. I make too many wide seconds, often dropping a shot or two by them, in the course of a round. Incidentally, there was another and very curious result of my standing a little more in front of the ball off the tee. Abe Mitchell, with whom I played a lot of golf last year, very often found himself aiming at the right-hand side of the fairway just because I was doing it. It is an extraordinary game.

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### *Chapter XIII. American Golf and Golfers*

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VARDON and Ray have lately come over from America, where the game is developing at a great rate and, according to Vardon, they have a few amateurs who are quite capable of winning our Amateur Championship. Both he and Ray have a great opinion of Mr. Bobby Jones, and they also have naturally something to say about Mr. Chick Evans, the present amateur champion of America. When I was in the States in 1911 I had the pleasure of playing half a dozen rounds with Mr. Evans, and there never could have been any doubt that he was a great player. Perhaps the weakest part of his game in those days was his play on the green, and, of course, he also suffered to some extent from inexperience. From what I can gather he is now just as good a putter as a man who plays the rest of the game well can expect to be, and he has now the experience. Of Mr. Jones I know nothing except what I hear and read. Ray tells me Mr. Jones does not take his iron clubs back as far as Mr. Evans does. This is all in his favour, as with his shorter up-swing he can afford to hit the ball harder than Mr. Evans, and firmness goes towards accuracy. Therefore, as far as one can venture on an opinion without seeing both, I should think Mr. Jones a better iron player than Mr. Evans. If they both come to Hoylake and there is the usual windy Hoylake weather,

Mr. Jones should do best in this department of the game.

Now that the American courses are constructed on more modern lines than they were, and so demand greater skill, the golfers from that country are not handicapped in that respect as they used to be. They are in some degree handicapped by having only eight golfing months in the twelve, whereas we play right through the year. Certainly we play little serious golf in some months, but we are always having a knock and thus keeping our hand in, which is a great help. Even if we only experiment, this is better than leaving off altogether.

This four months' idleness is not the American golfers' greatest handicap. They are all more or less inland products, and never yet has a golfer bred on an inland course won the Open Championship on this side. An inland golfer has won the amateur event on one or two occasions; but, generally speaking, though we have more inland than seaside bred golfers, those who are products of the genuine links have had our championships all to themselves. And so it must be, nine times out of ten, as the championships are always held on seaside courses, and the golf there is different from that on inland courses. Take two players, one who has learned his art on the links, the other inland. The latter cannot have so many shots in his bag as the other fellow who is always battling against a wind. He has never been asked to play the shots that the linksman has, and this is where I think America is handicapped.

On the other hand, the American who looks like

making a champion not only plays the game at which he makes good: he also works at it, and sometimes he slaves at it, to quote Mr. Dooley. In other words, the American golfers are specialising at the game, and with their up-to-date courses they are becoming most efficient players. But the best of them have not had sufficient practice on a course where a strong wind has to be combated day after day and so calls for shots that are never thoroughly known or learned on an inland course. Training on a seaside course helps to develop a better poise at the top of swing. When there is a wind in which one can hardly stand up, one has to retain the balance in hitting the ball. This must tend to make it easy to swing when one comes to an inland course, where the wind never amounts to much. The ball is also much easier to steer on an inland course. Again, on account of the sharp undulations on a seaside course the lies are more difficult. One gets shots to play in which one is standing a foot above or below the ball with a cross-wind blowing and the hole still two hundred and fifty yards away. Now, all other things being equal, the player who can balance himself best at the top of the swing has the best chance of making that shot. As an instance of what I mean, let us compare the performances of Walter Hagen and Jim Barnes in the Open Championship at Deal last year, when we had just a fair wind blowing. I took Barnes to finish better than Hagen, for a modest half-crown with two of my friends who should be good judges. Barnes' early training on a seaside course helped me to win my bet. Now, had Barnes accompanied Hagen, Mitchell, and myself over to France, my half-crown



would have been on Hagen against Barnes, for the reason that the French Championship was played at La Boulie, an inland course, where it blew very little but rained a great deal. My firm belief is that Barnes will finish ahead of Hagen on a seaside course until the latter gets more experience of this type of golf. I reckon Hagen to be the best golfer America has yet produced, at least as far as I have seen, as he has the best methods. I believe in his square stance and fairly upright swings and his open club-face.

The older school of "home bred" American golfers copied the school imported from St. Andrews, with a long flattish swing and a tendency to make all the shots come in from the right. One can get round St. Andrews with a bit of hook, and equally well without it. But it is a good thing to err on the left-hand side there. In the last few years America has imported half a dozen first-class players, and, better still, coaches whom England could ill afford to lose. Most of them are converts to new and better methods than those they had originally, and this makes it all the easier for them to impart their knowledge.

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## *Chapter XIV. Likes and Dislikes among Courses*

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I do not feel that I want to express my views on golfing architecture at any great length, although I have strong likes and dislikes both amongst individual courses and the different types of courses.

It might be imagined that as I am so whole-heartedly in favour of the "All air route," I should also be in favour of cross-bunkers. It was Taylor who said that there were no bunkers in the air: he is a great exponent of the "All air route," and he wants lots more cross-bunkers. I know he thinks that far too many of them have been done away with and too many have been put at the side. Well, I agree with him about making the ball do as much of its work as possible in the air, but I don't agree about the cross-bunkers. As a matter of fact, I am all against cross-bunkers, and like plenty of hazards at the side.

It seems to me that you can never put a cross-bunker in quite the right place. At any rate, I have not yet found the man who can. Cross-bunkers, when all is said, do not bother the good player. Almost their only use is to trap the man who half tops his shots, and the good player does not do that. But hazards skilfully placed at the sides of the fairway will always bother the best player in the world. He is the man

I want to see bothered. It makes the game so much more interesting.

I like dog-leg holes very much, and for my own particular benefit I like them best when the bend in them is towards the right. That is frankly because it suits the kind of shot I can play best. There are some very good courses where the bend is generally to the left. Addington is a good example. I think nearly all the dog-legged holes there turn to the left, and I do not like that so well. Everybody to his own taste, and I suppose the best and most interesting thing is to have some holes of both sorts.

I have a great admiration and liking for Mr. H. S. Colt's courses. I always feel that I can play any one on a "Colt" course. Perhaps I have been lucky on them, but they are certainly very good. Mr. Colt does not build fortifications across the fairway, but he is very skilful in placing his side hazards so that they catch a shot that may be pretty good but is not quite good enough.

If I am asked which is my favourite course, I give my answer unhesitatingly—the old course at St. Andrews. I think it is the best, and if I have got to play a match which is really of some importance, that is where I want to play it. St. Andrews has got a character and features that you find nowhere else. What I like about it is this, that you may play a very good shot there and find yourself in a very bad place. That is the real game of golf. I don't want everything levelled and smoothed away so that by no possible chance can your ball take an unlucky turn in a direc-

tion you don't like. People think and talk too much about "fairness."

Of other famous courses I ought to be fond of Westward Ho!, as I had the good fortune to do very well there, but the course did not really appeal to me very greatly. It is better than Deal, and perhaps I am ungrateful to Deal also, as I won the Championship there. After St. Andrews, among the Championship courses, I put Sandwich. Although in the days of the gutty there was so much said about the long driving needed there, it is under modern conditions just a little short, but it is a good sound test of golf and there is plenty of wind there, which is a great thing.

When it comes to inland courses there is for me only one, and that is Sunningdale. I think it is beyond any doubt the best, and very fine golf indeed. When I wrote that sentence there was one course that I had for the moment forgotten, and that is Gleneagles, but now that I have remembered it I stick to my original opinion. Certainly Gleneagles is a fine big course. Last summer it was still new and soft in places, especially around the green. That, of course, may be remedied with plenty of play. But it is a little too much of a long driver's course. It is a fine place enough for a slashing, hefty young man, and after I had left it I felt for a little while that I had left a little of my punch behind me there; but I do not think that there is a very great deal in it when once the punching is done.

I have not seen a great many of the courses which are said to be very good and are now springing up in America. I did see the National, and admired it very

much, and I often wonder why the American Championship cannot be held there. It seems to me that it must be the right place for it. I played at Myopia, too, and it is a very nice course, but I did not think it was another Sunningdale. However, I shall hope to know a good deal more about American courses after this summer.

**PART II**  
**BY**  
**BERNARD DARWIN**



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## *Chapter I. Practice: Its Pains and Pleasures*

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WILLIE PARK has lately revealed to the world that he used to practise putting at six holes with six balls for four hours a day. A good many readers will wonder why his back did not break and his very reason totter under the strain, but here, at any rate, we have a high ideal with which to begin a chapter on practising.

Golfers vary very much in their views on practising, and always must vary according to their different temperaments. Some practise a great deal, and of them again there may be made a subdivision into those who practise wisely and those who practise foolishly. Some do not practise at all. They say that it bores them and does them no good. Probably it does not do them much good just because it bores them. Some of them are fine players with naturally sound methods, generally learned in boyhood, which do not often "let them down." They would almost certainly be finer players still, if they could have made themselves take pleasure and interest in practising. I write as a compound of these various classes of players (excepting only the adjective "fine"). I have practised a great deal, but I am afraid it has often been foolishly. It has never bored me, though it has sometimes made me tired and unhappy, but I have left a big balance of interest and pleasure. I believe most



other people would do so if they would give themselves the chance. Some of the pleasantest recollections in a golfing life should be those of solitary rambles over the course with a single club on a summer evening, of wrestling with a new iron or a new stroke, of coming dimly to discern cause and effect, of glorious day-dreams of the secret at last discovered. There may be a horrid awakening on the morrow, but its bitterness cannot take away all the sweets of that dreaming. "Youth's a season made for joy"; it is also a season made for practising. As we grow older, and our game more set and more unlikely to improve, we come almost inevitably to practise less. We cannot go on unless we are hopeful. But golf is mercifully a hopeful game, and golfing text-books are not written for those who have grown cynical.

Practice is, roughly speaking, of two kinds. There is one in which we go out to struggle with a particular stroke that we are temporarily playing badly: let us say, to take a too common example, that we want to exorcise the demon of slicing tee shots or, still more desperate, that of socketing mashie shots. There is another case in which we are suffering at the moment from no definite golfing disease, but are trying to get over some weakness of which, well or ill, we are always conscious. Every golfer, if he is honest with himself, knows that there are certain strokes that he never approaches with confidence, strokes from which he prays to be delivered at a critical moment in a match. It may be a running-up shot, or one of those most difficult iron shots that are betwixt and between, neither the common pitch nor the full bang. It may be only

an inability to hold the ball up into a particular wind. When we go out, as we ought, to try to overcome these weaknesses we are taking long views. We are not thinking of to-morrow's round and the half-crown that Jones will win from us if we can't get rid of that slice. We are thinking generally of our golfing future. According to these two sets of circumstances we have different objects and different frames of mind.

Whichever be our object, however, there are one or two preliminary considerations equally applicable to either case. We must decide whether to be alone or take a caddie with us, and whether to stay more or less in one spot or to range over the course. It may seem an economy of energy to stay in one place and have a beast of burden, but I don't think it is so. We often see a player tee eight or ten balls in a row and hit them to a caddie stationed in the long field. The caddie retrieves them and brings them back and the player goes through the same performance. In one way he conserves his energy, but in another he dissipates it prodigally.

To hit half a dozen balls off one after the other is hard work. There is no walk between the shots, as in a game, to rest the muscles. Try it, and see how hot you get and how sore your hands. I have personally hands that are fairly proof. They practically never get sore in a game, but I can still pinch and blister them sadly by too uncontrolled practising. What is still more to the point, the eye and the mind tire as well as the body: it is difficult to go on trying, while practice without bending the mind to it is futile. There is another point that may not appeal

to the blessedly unimaginative. To many golfers the presence of anybody other than a casual passerby is prohibitive of useful practising. Even a caddie in the distance produces a horrid self-consciousness. When we are practising we ought not to mind for a second how ridiculous we may look. We want if need be to try the absurdest attitudes, to exaggerate this or that movement grotesquely in the search after truth. And then, suppose we do find the truth and hit a series of shots that have the old, right "feel" in them, we ought to be free, if such be our mood, to plunge hurrying after the ball, waving our club and chanting songs of victory. With a stolid small boy in the offing, I defy the least self-conscious to do that. Archimedes could never have shouted "Eureka!" if he had had a caddie watching him.

The question of staying in one place or of roaming depends a good deal on what kind of shot we are playing. If we have a driver or brassy it is perhaps easiest to hit up and down one stretch of turf. But we may grow weary more quickly from the sameness of the scenery, and in any case before we go home we had better test our new discovery on a fresh bit of ground. If we are practising iron shots it is certainly better to move about in order to get a greater variety of shot with different stances to play from, different marks to aim at, and different hazards to frighten us. Even in driving it is well to aim at some sort of mark. In iron shots, where the whole object is to arrive at a definite point, it is almost essential. To have always the same mark is dull and, since we come to know this one distance very well, may make

us think that we are playing better than we really are. To acquire confidence is enormously valuable, but we do not want a spurious confidence. So if there is plenty of room I am all in favour of making practice a movable feast.

There is one more general consideration, which I should perhaps have mentioned apropos of the caddie. There is nothing that takes the fun and the virtue out of practising like continual hunting for balls in the rough. So, if we do not take a caddie, let us practise with old balls, unless we are so rich that we do not mind losing new ones. At any rate, let us not look too long for the lost ones, but rather regard them as a modest price to pay for our improvement, soon to be recouped by winning other people's half-crowns. Mr. Hilton tells us that the Hoylake caddies, when they found balls lying about the links in the morning, used to know that Mr. Macfie had been out practising in the twilight on the night before. Mr. Macfie was a great practiser and made himself a great golfer. Here is one very small respect out of the many in which we may try to imitate his example.

And now let us take the first kind of practice and go out to wrestle in prayer with that club which has been betraying us. Incidentally, to take out a club with which we feel confident is not practice at all. It may be agreeable exercise, but it is not practice and it is not wise. We cannot hit better than well, and the devil of theorising may easily enter into us, shake our confidence, and make us hit worse. Besides, we have not got such an endless reserve of good shots that we can afford to waste them. The time will come

again when we are off with the club which is now behaving so well. We cannot postpone it by hitting good shots now, and we may precipitate it. Even when we do resolve to take out a peccant club, we are inclined to take a well-behaved one also in order that now and again we may play just one shot with it for the sake of cheering variety. Let us put that favourite club behind us in the locker, for it is a temptation of the Evil One. I have often yielded to it. I have gone out to play half-iron shots and taken a spoon with me. When I have lost several balls, my hands are sore, my legs tired and darkness is fast coming on, it turns out that I have smacked happily away with the spoon, which I could do well enough, and forgotten all about the iron shots that were crying out for practice.

So, after this digression, out we really go this time with our one club. Generally, as I said, it is good to have a mark and to practise where there is enough trouble to make reasonable straightness essential. But if our one club is a driver or brassy, and if we are in a really bad way with it, I think we had better allow ourselves a good wide open space to begin with. This ought to give us a little confidence: at the worst it should lessen the temptation to remove the eye too soon in order to see where the ball has hidden itself. All golfers more or less suffer from claustrophobia, but very few from agoraphobia. The more room there is, as a rule, the straighter they go, because they hit the more freely. If we have grown frightened we have most probably grown cramped, and freedom of hitting is what we want to regain. But we must not stay

in our open ground too long. If indulged in too freely it is an enervating cure. As soon as some symptoms of returning health are discernible we ought to move to new and narrower pastures. When we feel very strong indeed, a "long-short" hole, one that calls for a full wooden-club shot to reach the green, may be attempted. There is no mark so good as an actual green to test us thoroughly.

It may be that we go out with our minds a blank, in a state of equable despair, ready to try anything and everything, but more probably we have got a theory. Tea, let us say, has cheered us up, and we think we know what we have been doing wrong. Very well, then; let us first try the new specific, for we shall not be happy till we have. If it works, well and good. It should stand the test of a certain number of shots. If it does, that ought to be good enough for us. Even though it is only some little trick which cannot really get to the root of the matter, we had better rest content. Whatever it is, it has given us back some of our lost confidence, and if we do not think too much about it and exaggerate it (a fatally easy mistake about which I could write a whole volume), home is the best place for us.

Possibly, however, and indeed probably, the specific proves a failure. If another suggests itself we may try that one, too. If that fails, we must set ourselves down to careful, laborious plodding with the mind fixed only on hitting the ball. Nine times out of ten, indeed, this would be the most sensible course to begin with, but a fellow feeling forces me to make some concession to the theorist. "Aim more carefully"

was the doctrine of Sir Walter Simpson, at once the most delightfully amusing and unspeakably depressing of golfing writers. There is nothing to beat it. We may think of "slow back" perhaps, and "Keep your eye on the ball," but the main thing to say to ourselves is just "Hit the ball." Let us thump and plod and thump again. It will not always cure us, but in many cases it will do wonders. A deep-seated disease of long standing may be too much for this general cure, but in that case the patient had much better consult his professional adviser. I am assuming rather a transient ailment. If and when we have thus thumped ourselves into something like decent form, a difficult point arises: Are we to accept our improvement without inquiry as a gift of Providence, or are we to try to discover wherein the improvement lies? The cynic would say, "Go home and be thankful"; the theorist would verify with passionate precision the exact position of every limb. It *is* a difficult question, and I am disposed to take refuge in a compromise. Vardon has said somewhere that when a man is playing well he should "take a sly look at himself." It is a good phrase. We must not look this gift-horse of Providence too closely in the mouth, but if, without too impious probing, we can find out something useful, let us make a mental note of it. Only we must not—this with terrific emphasis—"imitate ourselves," to quote Sir Walter again. That mental note is only for reference in case of fresh backsliding.

In an admirable paper on "How to learn" in *The New Book of Golf*, Mr. Croome went almost further than Sir Walter. He recommended, chiefly for be-

ginner, but also I think for more advanced practisers, what he called the "Fundamental Shot." His whole description of it should be read, but I may quote this succinct and comprehensive one: "It might be called a half-shot, seeing that it is played almost entirely with the arms; body turn hardly enters into it at all. It constitutes the whole of a short pitch-and-run approach, and forms the essential beginning of every longer stroke." I offer this prescription to the out-of-form practiser as that of a good golfer with the gift for clear thinking and subtle analysis. Personally, I can only say that I have on occasions tried it, and found it effective with iron clubs. With my wooden clubs it was less successful. Probably I was too deeply sunk in old and vicious courses. With those less hardened I quite believe it may prove a very good plan.

There is one more point as to practising with wooden clubs—perhaps I should have mentioned it before—and that is the question of tees. If we are practising with a driver, with which we are accustomed to a teed ball, we had better take a tee now, though not, as we may be tempted to do, too high a one. With a brassy or spoon, which we habitually use through the green, to take a tee is obviously foolish. We may, indeed, do so for a shot or two with the brassy just to put a little courage into us, in the same way as we allowed ourselves at first an open stretch of country. We must not go on with it, however. It is just the fact of the close-lying ball that has frightened us off our shot, as likely as not. How often, when the ball is lying close through the green, do we dig with our right shoulders and lift up our whole bodies, in the



feverish desire to get the ball into the air, even though on the same day we may be hitting quite well from the tee. No tees, then, for our brassy practice, and even with a play-club it is sometimes a good plan to "tee the ball in a hole" for a while. The very fact of making the shot as difficult as possible, and concentrating our attention on it, forces us to go carefully. Certainly I have once or twice found the lost art of timing restored this way as if by a miracle. It is a remedy that does not always act; but when it does the cure is a comparatively lasting one.

With iron clubs we should not indulge ourselves at all in open country and the teed ball, and we had better, if we can, always play up to a hole. This makes our practice as like as possible to the real thing, and we ought not to have any illusions as to our improvement. Straightness and accuracy are the objects of iron play. Mere clean hitting, though of the greatest help towards attaining them, will not do in itself. There is the flag, and there are the balls that we have aimed at it. If the two are not reasonably near together, we cannot pretend to ourselves that the strokes were satisfactory.

According to our weakness we should choose the hole at which to aim. If our pitching is at fault we must have something to pitch over. Whether we are half-topping our pitches or taking them too heavy ("grumphing" them, to use Mr. Guy Ellis's onomatopœic verb), a bunker in front of us is equally terrifying. And we must be terrified in order to prove that we have conquered terror. Whichever of these two is our fault, taking the eye off the ball has most

likely something to do with it. We want that bunker to tempt us to lift the eye. It may be, on the other hand, that we are not in the least afraid of trouble directly in front of us, but are persistently pulling or pushing out our pitches. If we are pulling, of course, we want a bunker on the left of the hole to frighten us, but we had much better have one on the right as well. If we do not, the mere fact there is somewhere a *locus pœnitentiæ* may lull us into false security. In short, we want to reproduce faithfully and mercilessly the circumstances under which we shall in our next game have to play a real pitch. The one place where we need not perhaps insist upon trouble is behind the green; or if there is a hazard there, do not let us be downcast if we get into it. To be up is always a virtue, and more so than ever when we are nervous or depressed.

What I have said about pitching applies pretty generally to practice of other shots with iron clubs. Of course, we do not want a bunker in front of us if we are playing running-up shots, and it would be almost equally futile to practise that shot over soft and heavy ground. But whatever the shot, we shall be all the better for side-hazards and for playing up to a green. Also, if there is a wind we should practise both with and against it, with it on our back and on our face. In order to do this we shall have to play at several different holes, another argument in favour of peripatetic rather than stationary practice. There is a natural inclination to practise too much with the wind at our backs. It is amazing how the lightest breeze behind us makes us braver, smoothes out the

tangles in our swing, and minimises the extent of a hook or a slice. Do not let us pamper ourselves. In the same way, when we are practising, it is of little use to truckle to a fault by making allowance for it. In a match where our main object is to win the hole, it is otherwise. It is then foolish to be too proud. We must make the best of a bad job. If we are slicing, and there is a wind on our left and out of bounds on our right, it may then be true wisdom to aim towards mid-on. But we shall not cure ourselves that way. From being indulged our demon will be the lustier and more uncurbed, and the object of our practice was to exorcise him altogether.

One occasional indulgence we may allow ourselves with iron clubs. It may be licit, it may even sometimes be wise to take out two at a time. It is ridiculous to take out a wooden club if we want to struggle with an iron: the strokes are quite dissimilar. But the strokes as played with different iron clubs may be said to melt into one another. Therefore, an occasional shot with the iron that we can use may be not only harmless: it may actually help to restore touch and confidence with the one that we cannot; but it must be only occasional.

I have talked a great deal about practising when we are out of form, because that, alas! is the most common kind. There is also, as I said, the practice of shots in which we know ourselves to be habitually weak, the practice that looks further ahead. Advice as to the when, the where, and the how applies in either case. In this second case the chief question is the what. It is an individual question, since each

of us must best know his own besetting weakness. But nearly all of us, if we are quite honest, know that there is one constantly weak joint in our harness, and that is the half-shot or, as I called it, the betwixt and between shot with iron clubs. Practice spent upon that can never be wasted. I think some authorities have been almost too fierce about this shot. They have poured too much contempt on those who play something like a full shot with a lofted iron, or sometimes, indeed, on those who swing an iron at all. People who are not gifted with strength of wrist and forearm must sometimes resort to a full shot with a lofted club, and, discreetly used, it is an extremely valuable one. But if we have no half-shot there will be days when we shall find ourselves in sad difficulties. There will be a gap in our scheme of approaching, a distance that is just too long for our pitching shot, too short for our full or comparatively full shot. If we are lucky we may never get a stroke of that particular distance to play, but on other days we shall get it continually. We may try to avoid it as hard as we can; just as, if we are weak on our back hand at lawn-tennis, we run frantically round to make a forehand stroke of it. Be sure, however, that we cannot always escape. On a windy day, especially, when our full mashie shots are blown this way and that, we cannot possibly escape. So we must learn to cover that distance properly.

It is not easy. Great men have laid it down that it is always easier to play a half-shot with a strong club than a full shot with a weaker one. This, speaking on behalf of those who are not great, I flatly deny.

It is very difficult to learn to time a half-shot, mainly, I think, because we have no instinctive feeling to guide us as to the right place at which to stop the club on the way up. Nothing but hard work and trying different methods will teach us. It is comforting to know that champions have found it hard work. Listen to Mr. Hilton, than whom no player has ever had greater command over his clubs: "I could play the full shot," he says, "and I could play the wrist shot with confidence; but whenever I was presented with the problem of playing a shot which required more than a wrist shot, and something less than a full blow, I felt all at sea. . . . I spent many disheartening and tedious hours playing shot after shot of a description which I simply loathed, and apparently without any beneficial result, as immediately I was called upon to play a particular shot in a match, I approached it without the slightest degree of confidence." However, the confidence came at last and he mastered the stroke, "which," as he says, "I have since realised, represents all the difference between being a first-class player and a second-class player." Here is a good example to us all, and we must remember that even when we have practically mastered the shot in practising, it may betray us in a game. There is nothing for it, then, but still more practice and, further, a determination to play the right shot in a match even though it cost us some half-crowns. If we go on metaphorically running round our back-handers, we may win this or that game, but our definite place as players will be lower than it ought to be or might be.

A great many golfers say that they "cannot play

a running-up shot" much as they might say that they cannot drink champagne, regretting the circumstance, but attributing it to some constitutional infirmity which is no fault of theirs. Here again is scope for practice with iron clubs, and another shot to be cultivated in odd half-hours is the little chip from just off the edge of the green. See how well the professionals play this shot: how cleanly and crisply, and especially how hard they hit the ball. The method of most amateurs looks by comparison ragged and half-hearted.

It takes a man of strong character to practise niblick shots, but it is worth doing. There is nothing that keeps us out of bunkers so surely as a measure of confidence in our niblick play. It is the terror of not being able to get out that puts us in. And there is so much more that we might practise beyond the "common thud," of which the sole object is to get back on to the course, valuable though that is. Take, just as an example, the clean-lying ball in sand close to the hole. We may often get much nearer to the hole by playing the "explosive shot." It stops the ball dead, whereas the ball taken clean may run far past the hole. But we connect that shot in our minds with a bad lie in a bunker. The mere fact of having a good one frightens us out of playing it, or makes us do so half-heartedly and so disastrously. It would not have done so if we had practised the shot. I once knew an amateur coach who, since there was no professional at this particular course, would sometimes consent to set beginners on the right road. His invariable habit was to lead them to a sandy ditch full of stones and make them play niblick shots out of it, for he

said, in effect, "You will be sure to get into it, and had better learn to get out again." His method was likely to implant a lasting distaste for the whole game of golf, but those pupils who survived so drastic a novitiate may since have had cause to bless him.

Though I have suggested several shots with iron clubs as suitable to the earnest student, that is not to say that he cannot increase his repertory of wooden-club shots. The whole art of wooden-club play does not consist in hitting the ball "bloomin' hard, bloomin' high, and bloomin' often." Indeed, there is no end to its fascinating mysteries. Any one who doubts this had better go out and watch Mr. Hilton in a wind, especially with his spoon. He will come back thinking that there is enough that he does not know to keep him practising for the rest of his natural life.

Putting is so much an art of itself that I am keeping a few words on putting practice to the end. As to all the other practising hitherto mentioned, there is one final and golden rule: Finish up with a good one. To miss forty-nine shots and then hit the fiftieth is more likely to send the golfer home with mind at ease than is the exact converse. He must end "with a good taste in his mouth." I said this was a final rule for his guidance, but there is yet a corollary to it. When he gets home let him put his clubs firmly away without so much as a single waggle. Do not let him gloat over his cure, nor enter into the medical details to his family—nor give them a practical demonstration of "what was wrong." If he does, the same thing or something else will probably be wrong again next day, and it will serve him right.

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## *Chapter II. Some More About Practising*

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IN the last chapter I presumed that the practiser had a golf course ready to his hand. If he has not he may have a field for long shots and a garden for short ones. These are not so good as a course, but much better than none at all. In the field there is generally some definite point that can be taken as a mark, and there is also the wind, which blows impartially for the rich man on his golf course or the poor man in his meadow. In the garden there is generally no lack of hazard if the owner does not object to pitches being played over his flower-beds. There is a natural temptation to spare his feelings as regards divots, but this must be resisted. To be afraid of taking turf is to hit the ball gingerly, and that will not do: the practiser *must* be firm with his pitches, and if necessary with the owner of the garden.

Again, apart from putting on the drawing-room carpet, practising of a sort is possible indoors. As to its benefit I grow sceptical as I grow older. I have had plenty of experience to make me so, for I have been an inveterate indoor practiser. I have worn holes in the carpet by swinging, and broken lamps; I have pitched into a capacious armchair; I have practised putting in a bell-tent with the tent pole for a mark, and I am inclined to think that I have done myself at least as much harm as good. This is not



to say that somebody else cannot do himself good: only he must have more sense and self-control than I have. In the "Badminton Library" there is a picture of a gentleman, just emerged from his bath and girt with a towel, waggling a golf club. He is a sensible man: by these few waggles he is retaining something of the touch of his club, so that when he next uses it it will not feel as strange and stiff as a cricket bat. By all means let him waggle freely, and even ferociously: it keeps his wrists supple and his hands familiar with the feel of a grip. The professional in his shop is not swinging a club, but he is for ever handling one; it always feels a live thing in his grasp, not something dead and unfamiliar. That feeling is what the amateur should aim at, and the waggles after his tub will help him. So will just a few swings if, to adapt the words of the "Jolly Young Waterman," he "swing along thinking of nothing at all." But to swing theoretically indoors is dangerous, for there is no means of testing the theories, and if persisted in to excess it will send the golfer to the tee next Saturday morning with his poor mind a mere battlefield for conflicting ideas. Sometimes it can be beneficial. I recollect once at Sandwich while dressing for dinner at the "Bell," being moved to swing with the poker in my room. I had been driving lamentably, and on the morrow was a match between the Bar and the Stock Exchange—a "blood match" against doughty opponents. Scarcely had I seized the poker when a light seemed to come to me. I swung, and swung again, and knew that I had "got it right this time." I was sadly late for my dinner, but I drove like an

angel next day and trounced my stockbroker. I tell that story, however, as the exception to prove my rule that, save for the entirely sane, indoor swinging should be a physical and not an intellectual exercise. An indoor "golf school" where a real ball can be hit into a net is another matter. I have never tried it, but I can imagine that it may be both instructive and entertaining. In America, where the winter cuts off the golfer altogether from his game, the indoor school is a regular institution, and I believe there are ingenious mechanical inventions to test the length and direction of the shot, so that the practiser may by the aid of a plan of a course amuse himself by playing an imaginary round.

Mr. Horace Hutchinson has recommended the swinging of a club indoors before a looking-glass. I have an enormous respect for him and everything he says, but on this point I am just a little doubtful. Our eye ought to be kept on the hypothetical ball. If we lift it to look at our reflection, that movement of the head must to some extent dislocate the swing. If we watch the entire swing we shall be watching a movement that differs greatly from our real swing at a real ball. The most we can do is, I think, to pause at the top of the up-swing or the end of the follow-through. "Just step out here and look at yourselves," said the Irish drill-sergeant to his awkward squad, and at these two points in the swing we can do that and perhaps learn something. We may observe, for instance, whither the face of the club is pointing at the top of the upward swing. We can never hope to see, however, why and how we mistime a stroke, where that

horrid little hitch comes in that we can feel but never locate.

The practising of pitches indoors is subject to the same difficulty as practising on the sacred turf of a garden lawn. We must come down hard on the shot without fear or favour, and we really must not cut divots out of the carpet. If we care to take down all the pictures in a big room, barricade the windows with mattresses and play off a mat, and if the servants do not all give notice in consequence, well and good. Otherwise we had better leave indoor pitches alone.

Putting is admittedly a separate art from that of playing golf. A famous professional player of billiards, after watching golf for the first time, declared that, were he to take up the game, he would practise nothing but putting for two years, until he could make sure of holing out from four yards: then he would learn the golfing strokes. Too many people make a mental distinction between the strokes on the green and all the other strokes, but not in the billiard player's way. They regard the god of putting as a capricious and Puck-like sprite that will one day be friendly and on the next delight to make fools of them. They never seriously try to tame him and make him permanently their friend. "Oh, yes," they will say, "I played very well, but I could not putt"; or conversely, "I could not play a bit, but luckily I managed to get some long putts in." This is not the frame of mind that will make a good putter, and "the man who can putt," if not always "a match for any one," is a match for ninety-nine out of a hundred in his particular walk of golfing life.

Willie Park has already been quoted for his feat of endurance in putting four hours a day. He made himself the best putter in the world. Jack White has practised till his back ached. Mr. Walter Travis and Mr. Jerome Travers are two other mighty putters and mighty practisers. Personally, I put Mr. Travers first among all the putters that I have watched, and in his early days he used to putt for hours together. Of course, to be a great putter a man must have a natural gift and a delicate touch, but here at any rate are some good examples to show that practice can make perfect.

I remember very well something that happened at Hoylake in 1898, at the time of the Amateur Championship, the first Championship I ever saw. It was just before lunch, and in the afternoon there was to be played what all the world considered *the* match of the Championship, the meeting in the fourth round between the late Mr. F. G. Tait and Mr. Hilton. Freddy Tait was practising assiduously on the miniature putting course inside the white railings of the Hoylake club-house, and I stood gazing at him with hero-worshipping eyes. A friend came by and asked how he was playing. "All right," he answered, with a cheerful grin, "except this part of the game, and this'll be all right by the afternoon." And it was, for he putted very well and incidentally gave the then open champion a dreadful beating on his own course. I can see him now holing a very long one on the "Briars" green and, just as the ball went in, thrusting forward his right foot in a characteristic movement.

This is a digression, but I cannot help describing

that little scene, because it is still so vivid and impressed me so much at the time. This was only an instance of a golfer, who was habitually a magnificent putter, feeling himself temporarily a little out of form. Most of us do not putt habitually well, and often very ill. Moreover, we are like men living on the brink of a volcano: we never know when and how suddenly destruction may overtake us. No precaution avails against Vesuvius, but we can practise putting. We can never be sure that our method will not go all to pieces under the strain of a hard match; but the sounder the method, the less likely and the less complete will be the disaster.

It is a good general rule to have one method of putting and stick to it through good and evil days, but it is necessary first of all to know that the method is a tolerably sound one. How few golfers can say so much for their methods! How few balls are hit quite truly, when near the hole! I believe that when an eminent billiard player begins to practise after a rest, he does not trouble his head so much about the strokes as about getting his cue arm to move smoothly and truly. In the case of the average golfer, his putter moves smoothly and truly in only a very small number of his putts. And so in practising he should not think too much about results: he must not be satisfied with a ball uncleanly struck that dribbles in at the back door. If he is conscious that his club is not going back straight, he may be pretty sure that though the ball may be going in now, it will not when it comes to a match: so he had better go on practising.

The player who is as a rule a steady putter, and

has a definite method, will try only minor experiments. He will wriggle his feet a little this way and that, hold his club rather shorter or longer, stand up a little straighter or (though this is dangerous) crouch a little closer. In short, he will try to regain confidence by trying to feel comfortable. He will pay attention to the everyday rules, "Keep your eye on the ball" and "Keep your body still," and perhaps to some little private law of his own; but he will attempt no drastic change.

He is a fortunate man: most people have what they are pleased to think half a dozen different methods, though to be sure the same fault runs through all and, when their bad day comes, the state of their mind quickly becomes chaotic. For such there is a wide field open for their experiments. In their practice they should, as I said before, take long views. Precisely where they put their feet is not of much account. They have, if they can, to find the real root of their recurrent trouble and then find a way to rid their golfing systems of it.

It seems to me that for the man who knows his method to be faulty, and is conscious of untrue hitting, the short putts are the ones to practise: those of a "nasty" length, from three to six feet, let us say. He who could hole all these would be much the best putter in the world; yet as regards any individual one of them, there is more annoyance in the missing than glory in the holing of it. That is what makes them so nasty, and so at this range are played most of the cramped, frightened, "jumpy" shots. To practise long putts is valuable for getting the strength of the greens,

but the difficulty of hitting truly is here far smaller. The most besotted of us do not pinch the putter inwards round our legs, or push it wavering outwards in the twiddles of a pig's tail, when we are a dozen yards from the hole. It is the short ones that will best help us to analyse our faults.

It is common to see a player practising putts with several balls, but one, or two at most, is better: at least for those who have not a great gift of concentration. With several the player is apt to putt quickly and carelessly. There is more labour and stooping involved in picking the one ball out of the hole, but this practice has got to be laborious and the player's back will ache in any case. Some slight variety may be introduced in the form of a sliding scale of distances. In order to improve his shooting Mr. Winkle proposed to "put a stuffed partridge on the top of a post and practise at it, beginning at a short distance, and lengthening it by degrees." Similarly we may begin by holing the ball at a foot and move further away by degrees, seeing how far we can get before we miss. We must be careful, however, lest the competitive spirit—even though we only compete against ourselves—does not oust the studious and analytical.

One of the snares against which we must be on our guard is that of trying too hard to make ourselves into putting machines. Certainly our method should be founded on sound mechanical principles, but a man cannot putt by principle alone. We may force every one of our limbs to behave as we want it, take the club back with infinite care in the prescribed way, and bring it back to the ball with its face precisely square

to the line—and yet the unscientific beast of a ball will not go in. “The ball maun be hit,” and muscles tautened and overstrained with too much hard thinking refuse to hit it. So when we have struck on a method that we believe to be sound and the ball begins to ring against the back of the tin with delightful frequency, we must not go on thinking harder and harder about the details of method. The body will have adapted itself to it to some extent: it will need the less and not the more compulsion—and we can afford to forget details for the moment and devote our minds singly to the main issue. And remember that though it is possible to be too limp, relaxed muscles will hit the ball far more freely and truly than taut ones. It is easier to relax the muscles in practise than in a game. Witness the many balls which in a critical match are pushed out to the right of the hole with a wooden, intractable wrist. The weakness that has periodically attacked Harry Vardon in recent years of giving the ball a “short sharp shock” upon the green appears to come from a sudden refusal of his wrists to do their owner’s behests. However, the more we try to keep the muscles from growing too taut in practise, the better our chance of doing so in a match.

It is unwise to do all our putting at the same hole. All putts are not dead straight and a few borrowing putts make a pleasant change, but while we are devoting our whole attention to taking the club back straight and hitting the ball truly, a fairly flat green is the best. Goodness knows that, with those two ends in view, we have enough to think about without the added complexities of borrowing. If we have our own private



putting green in a garden it is a good plan to have the holes a little smaller than the regulation size. Mr. Macfie used to do this and so, as he tells us in his book, did Willie Park. Park's holes were three and a half inches in diameter instead of four and a quarter, and he says that they made the orthodox hole look as large as a wash-tub. How heavenly and comforting a sensation!

The putt is the one stroke in golf that can be practised with some degree of verisimilitude indoors. Admittedly it is not wholly a satisfactory business, for a carpet is very different from a green and the leg of a chair is not a hole. A carpet has nearly always little runs in it which cannot be seen with the naked eye, and this makes borrowing, unless we know the course very well, a matter of chance. It is much faster than a putting green: so fast that there is a temptation to think nothing of running yards past the mark. Thus we hit too hard, and if we only hit hard enough, a table leg is fairly easy to hit. There was and perhaps still is, a device to simulate a hole for indoor putting. It was made of metal something in the shape of a horse-shoe. Across the opening between the two points of it was stretched an indiarubber band. The player putted at the opening. If his strength and direction were correct, the ball ambled gently over the indiarubber band and stayed inside the horseshoe. If he was weak the ball refused to surmount the band; if he was strong it jumped over both band and horseshoe. It was rather amusing but it was not the real thing, as indeed no indoor putting can be, though since writing that sentence I have been given another in-

genious device. But we can practise on the carpet the art of hitting truly. Mr. Hutchinson has pointed out in the "Badminton" that the lines in the pattern can be used to prove whether or not the club is going back straight. Sometimes they will reveal a horrid and unsuspected degree of iniquity. Strength we cannot learn indoors. The question of persistent shortness, so dreadfully important on the links, does not arise. The best we can do is to be as honest with ourselves as possible and not "bolt" our putts too outrageously.

I have assumed that it is impossible to cut a hole in the floor. The Englishman's home is seldom sufficiently his castle for that. A friend in America told me that he putted all through one winter in New York on the floor of a cellar which was covered, if I remember rightly, with sand welded together by some hardening process. Whatever was the precise substance, he cut a hole in it and putted nightly into it, and when spring took him back to the links he was a far better putter than ever before.

Nobody can say he did not deserve his success. I am afraid few will be found to follow so thoroughgoing an example, but I trust that many will practise if not subterraneously. And may they all attain to the ideal laid down by one of the best of all putters, Mr. John Low, that of "hitting the ball with freedom, grace, and accuracy in the middle of the club."

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### *Chapter III. The Golfer and His Temperament*

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It is a maxim of Mr. Charles Hutchings that "golf is nine-tenths mental." A golfer who won the Championship when he was a grandfather has at least a long and ripe experience to draw upon, and in this case no one will question the general truth of his words nor quarrel over the precise numerator of his vulgar fraction.

Perhaps we are the more convinced of this truth because during the years of war we heard so much of "moral" and the "will to victory." Fortunately it is still not regarded as correct to try to undermine our adversary's confidence by means of propaganda: we do not put in his way leaflets telling him how well we have been playing, and how kind we shall be to him if only he will let us win. We do, however, acknowledge more honestly than we did, that "temperament" has a great deal to do with the winning and losing of our matches. We admit that at some critical moment the nervous strain proved too much for us and that we "cracked." Once upon a time those who reported golf matches confined themselves to recording hits or misses without speculating very profoundly as to the cause; if a great player missed a little putt, he always did it "unaccountably" or perhaps he was described as putting "slackly." Slackly—

Heavens above! when the poor man's muscles were so tense and taut that he could scarcely get them to move the club. To-day the reporter is much braver. He will insinuate that "the fact that Mr. B. holed a long putt seemed to have an unfavourable effect on Mr. A.'s game." Sometimes he will be quite ruthless and say that "from this point Mr. A. went all to pieces."

It is much better to speak honestly of these unpleasant matters and not shy away from them as if they were improper. By doing so we may in some degree improve our powers of control, just as by taking thought we may sometimes add a cubit to our drives. It is a subject on which I write as one, acutely conscious of having too much "temperament," who has not in his own case discovered a successful cure for it. I can only beg the reader to put out of his head all nasty, unkind proverbs about people living in glass houses or of physicians healing themselves, and to regard me purely as a detached observer of other men's frailties.

There is one bit of advice the value of which no one would, I imagine, dispute—"Know thyself." A golfer may greatly strengthen his match-playing powers by trying and practising, but he can only do so by making the best of himself as he is, not by attempting to turn himself into quite another sort of creature. Not long ago I was watching a very good amateur player playing an important match. He looked extraordinarily calm and impassive: he walked after his ball and played his stroke almost as one sleep-walking. With me was one who knew this golfer very well indeed. "So-and-so thinks so much,"

said he, "about making the crowd think that he does not care, that he sometimes forgets to hit the ball." That was a very astute observation, and it points out a danger in too consciously schooling ourselves. Very few of us can hope to look as supremely bored as Inman does when his opponent is in the middle of a big break. It springs from natural and inimitable genius. To drill ourselves in external points of behaviour is good in so far as it helps us to control the burning fires within us. No man, to take an extreme instance, can foam at the mouth and hurl his club after the ball and yet hope to be in a proper frame of mind for playing his next shot. But it is what is going on inside us that demands our main attention. Beyond a certain point it is only labour lost to put a mask upon our faces. It deceives nobody and distracts us from the main issue.

Knowing our own particular weaknesses, we must treat them with a combination of tenderness and sternness difficult to attain in exactly the right degree. On some points it is wisest to give way to ourselves. If, for example, we are trying to get into our best form for a particular occasion, the question arises of what sort of practice matches to play. Some people will thrive on a course of fierce fights against players as good or better than themselves. Easygoing games would only make them lazy; the hard struggles tune them up without overstraining them. Certainly there could be no better preparation as long as they are quite sure they can stand it. On the other hand, some players, apart from not being physically strong enough, know that they cannot help taking their prac-

tice games too seriously, thinking too much about the winning or losing. They know that should they lose two or three times, even though they have played decently well, it will affect their confidence. If so they had better perhaps pander to this weakness, and administer to themselves the soothing syrup of a game or two with some nice feeble flattering old gentleman whom they are sure they can beat.

I remember some twenty years ago being at Westward Ho! where there was then a large assembly of fine golfers. Perhaps I was trying to play in company too good for me. At any rate, I was playing very ill and had utterly lost confidence. Mr. Hilton said consolingly to me, "Wait till you get to P." (another course where I was going to play): "you'll be cock of the walk there and you'll soon play all right again." That was not only an excellent piece of education for a young and foolish golfer, but a true prophecy. When I got to P. and was surrounded by—comparatively speaking—golfing pigmies, I began to play quite well and my lost conceit came back by leaps and bounds. Of course this form of treatment must not be overdone. I suggest it, for golfers of a certain type, only as the immediate preparation for a particular day. Generally speaking it would be fatal. I can think of one really brilliant golfer who, from a distaste for the fierce clash of battle, played so persistently with those far his inferiors, that when he had perforce to play a match on level terms he suffered the tortures of the damned. If we know our frailty in this respect, we must put ourselves resolutely in the way of being beaten and try not to "get our tails down" over it.

There are few things so destructive of the necessary belief in ourselves as having some one *bête noire*, a player who, judged by other standards, may be no better than us and yet always thrashes us. We must go on playing with him and not run away, and it is curious and consoling to observe how, if we do once beat him, fear vanishes. Very often the situation is suddenly reversed and it is he who begins to think that he cannot beat us.

There is just one cheering fact with which the nervous golfer may legitimately comfort himself. It is not the torpid creature with the "dead nerve," as I have heard it called, who does best in a big match, but rather the highly-strung man who can master himself. It used to be said of one of the greatest advocates at the Bar when in the height of his fame, that the papers would crackle in his hand before a big case, as if he had been a timid junior with his first brief in a county court. The moment he was on his feet nothing more serene and masterly could be imagined. So it is, though in varying degrees, with eminent golfers. Braid has said that he likes to feel a little shaky before a big match, but his kind of shakiness is probably of a comparatively stable kind. Taylor is clearly wrought up, and is so terrible because of the iron grip that he keeps on himself. Those who knew Mr. Walter Travis well declared he was a nervous man. Yet when he conquered at Sandwich—and no one ever better deserved to win—there was something diabolic in his apparent calmness. He was Colonel Bogey incarnate.

I suppose the worst temperament for golf, as for

any other game, is that which is called the artistic or poetic or imaginative: the worst, that is to say, unless it is most rigorously schooled. The imaginative player has a much greater difficulty than his more stolid brother in keeping strictly to the matter in hand. It is hard for him to make his mind as nearly as possible a perfect blank when he goes up to hit the ball. Well has it been said that "Golf lends itself readily to the dreaming of scenes in which the dreamer is the hero." No castles tower higher and more glittering in the air than golfing castles. Before a match or a medal round we play in imagination every single hole. We try to be modest and reasonable: we know that in fact we shall make a mistake or two; and in our dream-cards we mean to introduce a few fives, even perhaps a six for the long hole against the wind, to break our beautiful line of fours and threes. But as we come to each hole we cannot quite bear it: the imaginary mistake gets put off and off, till at the end we have played better than Vardon ever did and gone round in 69 or so. This amusement is so childlike, so far removed from grim reality, that perhaps it does us no great harm. Once we settle down to a real, as opposed to a dream game, we think no more about it. The fatal thing is to play a dream round at the same time as we are playing a real one.

Suppose we are two or three up, we begin to look forward to the winning of the match, say, on the fourteenth green. We picture our opponent chivalrously congratulating us and saying that we have been altogether too good for him: our friends clapping us cordially on the back with a "Well played, old chap":



spectators looking at us with reverential interest. And just as our dream has reached this perfect consummation, bang goes our adversary's ball against the back of the tin! He has holed a horrible, "gobbling" putt from thirty yards away. Our comparatively short putt which was to have been for the hole is now only for the half, and we shall miss it. We come down to earth with a bump. Our dreams instead of being rosy and golden become black as night. We fancy those friends of ours saying, "Poor old chap! He was four up at one time and then actually let himself be beaten. He's got no guts—he can't last." And at once we set to work to justify those imaginary comments.

For this disease there can be no certain cure. We can only take and shake ourselves—metaphorically—and say, "Don't be a self-conscious idiot." And we can try our very hardest to concentrate our minds on each shot as it arises and to take our time. The man who, having had a winning lead, is in process of losing it, is easily recognisable. He walks with a rapid, flurried step: he puffs at his pipe as if his life depended on keeping it alight: he plays the shot as if his one object were to get it over. It is a horrid moment, but it will not be made better by hurrying. Now, if ever, is the time to walk slowly and study the putts from both ends and at the same time to play a reasonably bold game. When once a little of our lead has slipped we begin all too soon to think of a halved hole as our highest possible ambition. Of course if we halve enough holes we shall win the match, but to hope

for nothing better than halves is not the way to set about getting them.

Here is the sort of thing we have nearly all done and suffered, and seen, too, in the case of other people if we ever watch matches. A. having been four or five up on B. is now only two up with four to go. At the fifteenth B. plays the odd and does not get on to the green: he is in the rough, or even in a bunker. "Thank God," thinks A. to himself (you can see him thinking it). "He won't do better than five—I must be able to halve this one, I must be careful." And he plays a very gingerly shot which just reaches the edge of the green. B. promptly puts his niblick shot dead, A. takes three putts. He loses the hole, and it is tolerably certain he will lose the match. Could he have controlled himself and his thoughts, he would have played a bolder second and made sure of his four. Then in all probability B. would not have put that niblick shot dead or anything like it, for though we are sometimes overwhelmed by the irresistible brilliance of our enemy, it is a rare case. As a rule he plays just as well as we let him and no better.

We must never entirely disregard the art of "playing to the score," but I am sure we can think too much about it. When our adversary has played the two more it is futile to attempt a long and dangerous carry, but consciously and deliberately to "play safe" every time we have just a little the best of matters and think the enemy is in difficulties is not the way to win a match. For, first, he may recover, and, secondly, we are not always safe when we mean to be. The shot that is played with no object but to keep the ball in

play is just the one we are apt to bungle most sadly. A distinguished golfer of an elder generation said to me the other day that modern players had lost the art of playing the spared shot that was to keep the ball out of trouble and do no more. Perhaps they have: at any rate most of them find it difficult. That particular golfer was once playing in a hurricane of wind at Hoylake. He kept the ball skimming close to the ground and out of harm's way with a straight-faced cleek having a short, stiff shaft, while his adversary, attempting more orthodox strokes, was being blown all over the place. "Mr. H.," said his caddie, "is not playing a proud game"—and the words have become almost proverbial. To be able to play that sort of golf is a valuable gift, but it is one to be acquired by practice. To attempt it suddenly in a match, when it is unfamiliar, is very dangerous. If it is unsuccessful it will demoralise the player and set the flame of hope burning very brightly in his enemy's breast.

However pitiable our frame of mind, there is, no doubt, much virtue in a mouth kept tightly shut. The enemy may see, from unmistakable signs, that we are agitated, and that will do him good; but be sure that we shall do him much more good if we tell him so in words. I once met in a Championship a young gentleman who was so obliging as to lose the first five holes running. He then remarked with a rather elaborate buoyancy, "I never mind being down at the beginning of a match; in fact I rather enjoy it. Only yesterday I was five down to so-and-so at the turn and beat him." That was perhaps carrying things too far, but his principle was a sound one, namely, that

of not letting me become arrogant by believing him to be down-hearted. There are few things more worrying than an opponent who refuses to "crack" when we think he ought to. If we play the first half a dozen holes almost perfectly, and at the end of them have only got a beggarly lead of one, we find the situation distinctly wearing.

This hypothetical golfer with the poetical and imaginative temperament very often finds prosperity harder to endure than adversity. He is not necessarily deficient in courage, and may fight very well when he is down. But when he gets a winning lead, or at any rate has pulled round a match from a most unpromising situation and given himself a real fighting chance, then is the time that we see him collapse. How many matches have been lost just because the player was impatient to be done with the strain of it and would not give the match time to finish itself! I shall never forget a certain match I once played in an Amateur Championship at Sandwich. I was three up with four to go, and at the fifteenth hole my opponent had played short of the cross-bunker in two. I had hit a good tee shot, and it was possible for me to get home in two; but my lie was not very good, and in any case the stroke was a difficult one. Any sane man would have played short, got his half in five, and made himself dormy three, and the match would then in all probability have come quietly and happily to an end at the sixteenth. But I was for the moment insane: went for the carry, was trapped in the bunker, took six and lost the hole. Being thereby unsettled and wanting badly to kick myself, I lost two out of the last

three holes, and the match was halved. The moral of the story is not quite perfect, because I scrambled home at the nineteenth hole, but no man ever more thoroughly deserved to be beaten. Infinitely better players are not quite proof against this impatience. In October last Herd and Joshua Taylor met J. H. Taylor and Braid in the final of a foursome tournament at Sunningdale. The golf was extraordinarily good, and Herd and his partner, having been down on the way out, came home in so overwhelming a fashion that they stood dormy two up. On the seventeenth tee, Herd, who had been playing with a controlled fury that was a joy to witness, seemed suddenly to be in a hurry to make an end. Instead of his usual elaborate winding-up process, he took only a very few waggles—and topped the ball into the heather in front of his nose. The match was won by Braid and Taylor at the twentieth hole.

I may give one more illustration of a rather similar mistake, because the incident itself was amusing in rather a cruel way. In the qualifying rounds for the American Amateur Championship at Garden City in 1913, eleven men tied for the last ten places. These eleven had to play a kind of nightmare musical chairs in order to eliminate one of their number. They all started at the first hole together. Among them were Mr. Jerome Travers, the holder, who ultimately won again, and Mr. Heinrich Schmidt, who had just done remarkably well in our Championship at St. Andrews and was something of a national hero in consequence. The first hole at Garden City calls for a moderately straight drive and a pitch. In front of the green is

a deep bunker with a boarded face; beyond the green there is no trouble save some mildly rough grass. Mr. Travers showed what generalship should be on such an occasion. He left it to some one else of the eleven to make the bad mistake, knowing well that one of them would do so, and aimed at nothing but mediocrity. An iron from the tee kept him on the fairway. Then he pitched boldly over the green, chipped back and got a comfortable five. Of the others, who are material to the story, Mr. Schmidt hit a magnificent drive with a wooden club quite close to the cross-bunker. Two players, Mr. Perrin and Mr. Ulmer, were in the rough from their tee shots. Mr. Perrin was discreet and trusted, not in vain, to the mistakes of others: did no more than get out of the rough in two, pitched home in three, and got his five. Mr. Ulmer was impatient, went for the green and plunged into the big bunker. At last it was Mr. Schmidt's turn. The one thing he had to do was to play any kind of a shot over the bunker: the obvious club was a mashie, and if he did overrun the green a little he would still be perfectly safe. What did he do but take a niblick and play a very high cut shot with it! If the ball had pitched a yard or so further than it did, he would probably have got a "gallery" three, but what was the good of a three when a five would do? As it was, his ball just did not clear the bunker. I will draw a veil over the rest of the story. It would take a long time in telling, for nine other players had to hole out before the unhappy Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Ulmer could settle the point. After all sorts of painful adventures Mr. Ulmer holed a very good putt for

a six. Mr. Schmidt took seven and lost that game of musical chairs. And he lost it in effect through impatience. He wanted to be close to the hole in two and be done with it, instead of being over the green and so putting off the end of the agony a little longer. I have called it an amusing hole—so it was: but it was also tragic—and the laughter was near to tears.

Against all these and many other temperamental vagaries, the sovereign remedy that is always recommended to us is “control”—and it is the right one. We cannot hope that the gift of it will suddenly descend on us from above. We must practise it as we would putting, and control does not merely mean refraining from throwing our clubs about, abusing our caddie, and indulging in the “tut, tut of the eminent divine or the more sulphurous exclamations of the vulgar tongue.” It means, for example, the avoiding of slack, half-hearted shots, and the taking always of a certain amount of trouble, the not running of absurd risks or trying fantastic shots “just for the fun of it.” In this respect the leading professionals set a wonderful example. If you see Braid playing a foursome with three thoroughly bad players on a course on which he knows every blade of grass, you will notice that he plays every shot with the same serene carefulness that marks him in a championship, studying the line of his putt from the hole if he has any doubt about it. The professional knows that one careless shot begets another, and he cannot afford to get careless. We have not his compelling incentive and may, if we like, allow levity to creep in now and again, but

he teaches us how we can improve ourselves if we think it worth while.

To take a reasonable amount of time over every shot, and not to run at it like a bull at a gate, is another instance of control. It makes it far easier to take pains when they have got to be taken. There are some whose pace in an important match is quite different from that of their ordinary, workaday rounds. We cannot all play the same pace, but each of us ought to have a more or less constant pace of his own. As Duncan walks up to his ball his waggle seems to be made, and his feet fall naturally into their place almost simultaneously. Mr. Hilton, on the other hand, always very deliberately puts his feet in their place before he begins his waggle. Here are two fine players with entirely different methods. Each employs the one that suits him and neither ever varies it. Duncan must sometimes feel tempted to hang over the shot, Mr. Hilton to walk up and get it over, but each has himself in hand and does not yield to the temptation.

Those of us who have fidgety methods of address know the paralysing sensation of being unable to stop wagging. It assails us particularly in a match when we are feeling strung up, but we may do something to conquer it in our ordinary games. Again, there are few things harder to bear on occasions than to be kept waiting over every stroke by those in front of us. It is not so bad on an habitually crowded green, where golf is always a sedate procession, punctuated by long pauses. What is so exasperating is the single couple of slow players who make all the difference between



a tedious round and a clear green. Then is the time to take ourselves by the head and either sit or stand still, without stamping or swearing or chafing, and wait till it is time to strike.

A partner who constantly loses his ball so that we have to hunt for it and are consequently always being passed, a well-meaning ass who will come and talk to us, an innocent lady who walks behind us, a caddie with ill-timed hiccups—how many things there are as to which we can practise the bearing of them with a decent measure of calmness. And be sure that the better we bear them in private, so much less will be the strain when the great day comes. Even the action of picking up our ball and surrendering the hole gives us scope for practising our good resolutions. It may be done in the manner of a philosopher or of a sulky child.

The habit of control is equally valuable whether in match or medal play, but the particular quality of strain to be borne varies with the form of game—or torture—in which we are indulging. In medal play it is longer and more continuous, in match play more acute at certain moments. Some people can endure, may actually enjoy, the one, some the other. In match play, of which we have hitherto been talking, it is the unexpectedness of a shock that often destroys us—a miraculous recovery by the enemy followed by a missed putt of our own—the entire tragedy making a difference of two holes. In a medal it is true that one mistake may be almost fatal, but though we may be frightened of the big bunkers, it is not they that ruin us. Again, though we may give ourselves unpleasant

shocks, at least we cannot receive them from any one else. There is no living adversary for us to endue in imagination with an infallibility that he is far from possessing. In a medal round we simply beat ourselves. Much dripping wears away a stone, and continual fussing and fretting, with never a breathing space such as there may be in a match, wears away the golfer. It is nearly always the putting that does it. If you take a walk on a medal day you will see the most ludicrously bad putting. The approach putts are nearly always short, and as to the holing out you would think that half the players were suffering from some painful disease of the wrist—so stiffly do they poke and prod at the ball with never a free wrist amongst them. Sir Walter Simpson declared that the only way to putt well in a medal round was to putt carelessly. It is a paradox with a great deal of truth in it. Much of this terror comes from our playing so few scoring rounds. Familiarity breeds, if not contempt of the scoring card, at least some respect for ourselves. It is very good discipline, too, and if the American amateurs are going ahead of us now, I suspect they owe a good deal to the constant succession of thirty-six or eighteen holes of score play with which their tournaments begin. Anybody, and especially any young golfer who is in earnest about improving his game and his temperament, ought, I am sure, to play as many medal rounds as he can. Let him scour the country for open meetings and never disdain the humble monthly medal. He will be called a pot-hunter by his more otiose or timorous friends, but he will get his reward.

I do not know that there are many categorical "don'ts" for a medal player, but I am sure there is one, namely, don't hang about for some time on the tee before your turn comes. Abe Mitchell's dramatic collapse in the third round of last year's Open Championship, when he seemed to have the first prize in his pocket, is now historical. One can never be certain what might or might not have happened, but assuredly Mitchell did himself no good, and perhaps a great deal of harm, by being down at the course far earlier than he need have been, and pottering about on a rather chilly, cheerless morning waiting for his number to go up. I think it was Mr. Hutchinson who recommended a "penny dreadful" as the best solace for this bad quarter of an hour of waiting, and certainly the mind should be occupied with something that is not golf.

It is not at all a good plan, though it may be better than mere fretful waiting, to go out and look at somebody else playing the first few holes. I am perhaps peculiarly constituted in finding that the watching of others immediately before playing myself produces an utter paralysis of the eye; but in any case it can do no good. If those whom we are watching start ill, what are they but drops in the ocean? We may be sure that some one else is playing well. If they start well they make us think far too much about the stroke or two that we drop in our first few holes.

It is, of course, a stock piece of advice never to give up trying in a medal round. An unexpected three or two towards the end may always transform a bad into a decent score, and apart from that there are days

when whole fields are stricken down with absolute impotence, though the weather is fine and there is nothing to account for it but sheer human frailty. It was only last summer that a North Berwick medal was won by a player who, though he had not actually torn up his card, had ceased to take the faintest interest in it some holes before the finish.

There is one difficult decision that often has to be made either in a match or a medal round, namely, whether or not to try a change either of club or of style. The last thing we want to do, if we can help it, is to have experimental notions in our heads on an important occasion. We are likely to do best if we think about nothing but hitting the ball, and not even, as some may say, too much about that. But there are days when we go off some stroke or some club, and feel tolerably certain that the right touch for it is not coming back to us for a while. The commonest and most obvious case occurs on the green. The putter that has been so friendly and comfortable to our hand suddenly becomes estranged, or our feet feel and look as if they were in the wrong place. Sometimes we have in addition a prompting, almost amounting to a heaven-sent instinct, that a particular club or attitude would put us right again. In the last case it is surely folly to hesitate. Let us take the new club or the new stance and be quick about it. There is no time to be lost. It is futile to go on for just one more hole to give the old club a chance of regaining its character. It is very unlikely to do so, when it has once been called in question. "Doubting in our abject spirit," we shall go on until our card has come to tearing point or our

adversary is four up with six to go, and then it will be too late. Of course, the experiment will not always succeed, but if it does not we shall be no worse off than we otherwise should have been. If it does succeed it will probably do so in no uncertain way, for a fresh club in a good temper can for the time being perform prodigies.

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## *Chapter IV. The Four-Ball Match and the Foursome*

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To any golfer who has been properly brought up it will appear that I have placed the two different forms of golf at the head of this chapter in the wrong order. "Surely," he will say, "the man has an ill-regulated mind, or perhaps I am uncharitable and it is a printer's mistake. But the foursome must come first." Yes, I agree with him, the foursome should come first: it is the older and the better game, but it does not come first—more is the pity—in popularity to-day. And therefore, as this chapter may have a little of the sermon about it, I have put the four-ball match first on purpose, in order the more to emphasise my point.

It is sometimes said by golfers of knowledge and experience that if British amateur golf is for the moment is rather a bad way, it is due to the four-ball match. I am disposed to agree with them. We may be only passing through the transition stage. The older golfers have since the war, perhaps, grown just too old: the younger ones not steadied down nor come to the plenitude of their powers. Certainly we have in this country a large number of young players who can at times play very fine shots and hit the ball magnificently. They hit it so far and so clean that their elders groan enviously, "If I could only hit the ball like that, what a game I could play." They imply

that, granted such power, the result produced by the younger men is disappointing. So for the time being it is. On one day or for one round they are unbeatable: the next they are "all over the place." They are not to be relied on for a special occasion, as were the great amateurs of some years ago. And, whether or not they are attributable to it, these alternate spasms of brilliancy and futility, this slap-dash golf, are typical of the golf too often to be seen in a four-ball match.

It may be very cogently answered that the four-ball match is *the* game in America. It is said and, as far as my experience goes, quite truly, that if there are only two men in an American club-house, they will not start out to play a single, but wait for two more to make up a four. Yet the American amateurs are to-day admittedly very good, as they have shown not only in their own tournaments and championships, but when they have been matched against professionals. The four-ball match, it will be said, has not done their golf much harm. To this argument there are, I think, two answers. First, the four-ball is the American amateur's *game*, but he has also a great deal of hard *match* practice. He plays in a whole series of tournaments, consisting first of all of a qualifying round by score and then of several rounds of match play. Secondly, he plays his four-ball game in rather a different manner and spirit from the British amateur. He does not have a dash at some breakneck carry and then, if unsuccessful, pick up his ball. His passion for counting his score keeps him pegging steadily away and prevents him from being too dashing. Apart, too,

from holing out and keeping his score purely for his own satisfaction, he must often do so by the rules of his game. There are other issues at stake besides the main one: subsidiary matches, wheels within wheels. Very often the match is played on the principle of "aggregates," when the hole is decided by the united scores of the two partners on either side. This seems to some of us a rather slow and cumbrous business. It is impossible unless the other people on the course are playing a similar game. For myself I pray devoutly that a wave of aggregation will not come flooding over our courses. But if a four-ball match is to be played, so as not to be detrimental to the player's golf, then I suspect that this plan of aggregates, with its demand for continual care and concentration, represents the least harmful form of it.

It is undeniable that most of us in this country, when we play a four-ball match, enter upon it with pleasantly light hearts, and slash out at our shots accordingly. There is really no reason why we should not play carefully, but as a rule we don't. Probably we often play too quickly because the people behind us are not playing four balls and we have an uncomfortable feeling that we are holding up the course. Moreover, there is a natural instinct to hurry, especially when one is the last of the four to drive off. In the mind's eye one sees the other three as sprinters toeing the mark and chafing for the crack of the pistol.

The effect of the four-ball goes deeper than this. Sometimes we exist in a continual state of pressing: we try to do too much either because our partner is no help to us or, more often, because in our vanity



we like to think we are "carrying" him. At other times we shift all the responsibility on to his shoulders. Neither of these two frames of mind are desirable if we want to prepare for real hard-fought single combats. The second is certainly the worst of the two, since we shall feel suddenly and horribly frightened without our prop to lean on. Even with the best intentions there are moments in a four-ball when it is difficult really to "sit down to" a stroke and take pains. For instance, our partner plays a fine long second and lays the ball quite close to the hole—a certain four, and a good chance of a three. It is only human in us to say, with an odd mixture of relief and irritation, "What's the good of my playing after that one?" Of course we ought to say, "Two chances of a three are better than one," and take as much pains as if our partner were in a bunker—but we don't. We may actually get a three because untautened muscles and a mind void of care will often produce a better shot than the severest concentration. But it does us little good to hit a good shot when we are not trying, and it is of very little use as practice for the occasion on which we shall be trying desperately.

The tactics on the putting green as practised by the average four-ball match player do not help him to cultivate either the art of putting or the art of match playing. There is a conventional procedure which is blindly followed. A. and B. have played the same number of strokes and are about equidistant from the hole. A., who is a little the further off, plays first, lays his ball somewhere near the hole, and says, "I'll get my four, partner, and then you can go for the

three." B. does go for the three, and how very seldom he gets it! How seldom he even looks like getting it! He has but one idea in his mind, to get past the hole at any cost in order to show that he means well. He gives the ball a bang, sends it six feet past, says perfunctorily, "Sorry, partner," and picks it up. He has had the satisfaction of feeling rather important because he had, as we may call it, the last word, but he was under no real strain, conscious of no real responsibility. He would have been much more likely to hole if he had only been trying to lie dead and felt it a duty so to do. The best four-ball match players I have seen do not adopt these tactics. Each man plays to a great extent his own game and tries to lie up close to the hole. I believe that these are not only better tactics but have a better general effect on the players' golf.

There are tactics through the green as well as on it, and they are likewise open to criticism and suspicion. My partner has outdriven me by a yard or two and the green is a good long way off, guarded by many bunkers. Now, if I am not tolerably confident of getting on to that green, I had better play safe and leave my partner to lash out for England, home, and beauty. What I am inclined to do is to say, "I'll have a go at it first, partner." If I play a fine shot, I preen myself accordingly and think myself the backbone of the side. If I fail, I think that I have played for my side and not for myself and all responsibility now rests on my partner: my conscience is clear. But I have deceived myself. It is a far easier and less nerve-racking thing to play the neck or nothing shot and then

abuse the other fellow—in thought if not in word. I have not been an honest partner, and when I come to play my next hard single with no one to lean on, and have to do my own “donkey work,” the lesson will come home to me.

I said that this chapter might develop into a sermon, and it seems to be justifying my prophecy. But I do not want to be too solemn, nor to say that a four-ball match cannot be a good game and a most enjoyable one. It is the ideal game for the third round after tea. Personally I never play a third round. It can also be good fun at other times, if the conditions be reasonably pleasant and the course clear. The four players should be as nearly as possible on an equality. If one partner is much weaker than the other, so that he can only hope to “come in” two or three times, it is rather poor fun for him, nor, unless he is of sufficiently strong character to play his own game, will it be good for him. He will be like a poor man struggling to live with rich ones and keep up appearances. He will be tempted to press from the tee and take his iron through the green when his conscience whispers “brassy.” The matter can be partially put right by strokes. Sometimes three out of the four players are in receipt of various numbers of strokes, which come dropping in all the way round, but they are a bore and a makeshift at best. There are players so oddly constituted that they are quite happy to plod along in the wake of a brilliant partner, their own efforts having no result whatever on the match. Indeed there was once a player, having some 18 of a handicap, who boasted that he and Mr. Hilton had never been beaten

in a four-ball match. Most of us, however, are neither so unselfish nor so fatuous. A fine day, a clear green, four good golfers all playing well—there indeed is a four-ball match that is both pleasant and exciting, and may even—I cannot quite forego my priggishness—be good education. But at the end of it the winners, though they cheerfully chink their half-crowns, are not sure that anything has been proved, and the losers are perfectly certain that it has not.

We now come to the second head of the discourse, the foursome, which is not so popular as it used to be or as it ought to be. There may be some subtle psychological reason for this, connected with the hurried and hectic times in which we live. Leaving this to philosophers to determine, I will suggest two more practical reasons. First, a great many golfers have only a limited time to give to the game and want to make the most of it by hitting their own ball. This is natural enough. Even so if they played the right sort of foursome now and then on their hardly earned Sundays, I do not think they would feel the time ill spent. And at least they might play foursomes on their holidays, when they are inclined to hit their own ball too much and grow stale, so that the change and the comparative rest would be very good for them. Secondly, many people do not like the game because they do not play the right sort of foursome. The average foursome is made up at luncheon after the first round. Two couples who have been playing singles agree to unite. Probably at least one party would prefer another single, but gives in to his companion who is tired. It is difficult to adjust the two sides

satisfactorily so as to make a match of it. The game begins with a certain spurious joviality produced by lunch, and often peters out into pure slackness and boredom. After one or two such unlucky enterprises, the player gets the notion firmly into his head that "a foursome is a rotten game," and vows he will have no more of it.

A foursome should not be made *ex tempore*. It should be made and played not gloomily but with a certain formality. If it can be made some days beforehand, so much the better, for thus the pleasure and excitement of it are gradually worked up. The partners should not represent a casual amalgamation; they should know each other and each other's game well and have confidence therein. They should be a team, and feel something of the mutual reliance, the patriotism, the friendly hostility to the other side which mark a good team game. When golfers can be persuaded into taking part in such a foursome as this, they nearly always enjoy it and declare, with the air of discoverers, that it is a much better game than they had supposed. Whenever at a summer or Easter meeting of a seaside club there is a foursome tournament, it is always the most enjoyable event and the one in which most general interest is taken. Those who have already been knocked out wager small sums on the survivors and forget their own woes in watching the final rounds. That there is more foursome play than there used to be in team matches is due largely to Mr. John Low and Mr. Croome, who have gently but quite firmly persuaded the kind hosts of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society to meet them in foursomes. There

are a few annual team matches, of which Sunningdale against Woking is the most old-established, played entirely for foursomes. There are four couples aside and two days' play, so that at the end each pair has played a round against each of the four pairs on the other side. Every match is fought out with the utmost keenness. "Delenda est Carthago" is the motto. Yet the whole contest is delightfully friendly, and the one fear that haunts each player is that he will have grown too old or too bad to be asked to play next year. Again, there are at least two societies, one in London, and one formed of members of the Honourable Society of Edinburgh Golfers, of which the members meet periodically to dine in order to make up foursomes to be played during the ensuing month.

These foursomes are even better than those in a club meeting, because they are played on level terms. The ideal foursome is so played, and there should be no difficulty in making up a level match. Disparity of skill is a disadvantage in a four-ball match. It is not so in a foursome. Some of the very best foursomes are those in which there is on either side one really good player and one much humbler partner. A good and a weak player against two moderately strong also make an interesting match in which, by the way, the shrewd onlooker will generally bet on the former couple. If the weak partner does not try to be too strong, but confines himself to the pedestrian virtue of keeping out of bunkers, it is often wonderful how his partner can help him along and what a score the two will do between them. It is good fun for both of them. The weaker has the pleasure of helping to pro-

duce a joint result quite beyond his own individual powers, and yet is entitled to feel that he is doing his share. The better partner has to play all manner of shots that do not ordinarily come in his way, and that from unfamiliar distances. If he is of the right temperament, the greater his difficulties the greater pleasure will he take in being "jolly"—like Mark Tapley—and "coming out strong."

There is a great deal that is skilful and to some extent subtle in the art of foursome play, but if we do not underrate it, neither let us make too much of it. There are some people who are spoken of, almost with bated breath, as wonderful foursome players. Sometimes we discover that all that is really meant is that they are more formidable with a partner than they are by themselves. They are even-tempered and pleasant creatures, whom it is easy to get on with, and they are clever enough to adapt their demeanour to their various partners. These are all good qualities very much to their credit, but there is nothing very mysterious about it. As regards their actual play, they are as a rule straight and accurate hitters rather than long ones, with a gift for avoiding the grosser forms of golfing sin and achieving a non-committal type of shot when playing the one off two; and they are sound putters. The inference, and I think a correct one, is that steadiness is of more value in a foursome than a single. Perhaps because people do not practise enough in foursomes, they do not often play brilliantly in them, and a dogged reliable sort of golf is generally good enough to win. The completely destructive shot, which loses the hole past all hope, seems to be more

shattering in a foursome. It may not shake the confidence of the man that plays it, because he knows that he is liable to do it now and again and accepts it as all in the day's work. The other partner may not be quite so philosophical over it, nor so certain that it will not occur again; his uneasiness may react on the player and give him a feeling of guilt, from which he would not otherwise have suffered. "The great thing in a foursome is to keep the ball in play," as a cheerful partner once remarked to me as he slashed our common ball away into the deepest rough in all Sunningdale.

I suppose it is also because steadiness is proportionately more valuable in a foursome than the good putter is so valuable a partner. On the face of it he only gets half his usual amount of putting to do and the worth of this single talent of his should therefore be diminished. But I believe it is in fact increased. Its value is not confined to his own shots. It enables him to "nurse" a timid partner round, first by leaving him nothing to do in the holing out, secondly by inspiring him to play his approach shots boldly.

It is, then, a mistake to make too esoteric a mystery of foursome play. "The ball maun be hit" (this can hardly be quoted too frequently), and nothing else will do. Moreover, we shall generally flourish or fail in a foursome according as we do or do not practise obvious and inconsiderable virtues. But this is not easy. It is not easy in a single and, though there are some who always do best in double harness, it is for most people still less easy in a foursome. Nobody will ever be a good foursome player who is always



reflecting that he has got a partner and wondering what that partner is thinking of him. He must study and consider his partner; he may properly allow his judgment on the kind of shot to play to be affected by the partner's existence: but when he comes to the playing of it there must be no thought but of the ball. In fact, to feel sane and normal is the object to be arrived at. For the highly strung and imaginative a good deal of practice may be wanted, but practice will do wonders in the end.

This is not a text-book of Machiavellian behaviour. A simple-minded and impetuous person, I have not the smallest claim to write one. It may be permissible, however, to say a word or two on general conduct towards a partner. As many as there are partners in the world, so many little shades of difference are there in the best manner of treating them. There are some who like butter laid on with a trowel and apologise to the tearful point, but on the whole not many. An honest "Well played" or "Sorry" is at intervals as welcome and soothing as an honest "Damn," but a parrot cry of "Hard luck, partner," is hard indeed to bear. Some golfers are very ingenious in conveying the impression that their partners are doing all the work and making all the hole-winning shots. If delicately carried out this is a most effective artifice. I knew one good fellow, good golfer and good foursome player, who had this amiable weakness that he played best when he fancied that he was "carrying his partner round on his back." If his partner could play up to him, appearing to shelter himself under his wing and rely on his strength, he would perform prodigies

of valour, and no matter who the opponents, down they went like corn before the sickle. Nor is this really an uncommon case. There are always partners with whom it does not pay to play too obviously well, though the exact degree of unobtrusive efficiency is, I admit, very difficult to attain. Such players are much better partners in a foursome than a four-ball match. In the one they try to help their partner along, but in the other they try to beat him as well as the two opponents.

There is no respect in which good foursome players differ more than in the length and frequency of their consultations. Some seem to have their heads perpetually together: with other couples each man plays his own game quite independently and the two only consult, if at all, on some large strategic question. The first plan will suit one man, the second another. It is a dubious recommendation of the first to say that it has an exasperating effect on the opposition. Let us say rather that if we are going to play foursomes we must steel ourselves to bear it. If possible we had better grin as well as bear it, and properly looked at these elaborate conferences are rather entertaining, with one enemy taking cover behind the ball, the other entrenched behind the hole. Certainly there is a perceptibly enhanced joy in life if "after all that fuss," as we say to ourselves, they miss the putt. Moreover, this consultative method is the old-fashioned and traditional one of playing a foursome. There are few more likeable golfing pictures than that in the "Badminton Library" of Allan Robertson and Tom Morris, two quaint whiskered figures, wooden putter in

hand, studying the line of a putt. We praise the element of mutual help and reliance in foursome play; so we must not get cross with those who live up to our own ideals more fully than we can ourselves.

This much, however, may fairly be said. Those who like plenty of consultation are entitled to ask their partner for advice, and he must do his best to give it; but if, as regards his own shots, he prefers to be left alone, they must be careful not to thrust advice upon him. Advice is a thing to be asked for but not offered. Even a suggestion of taking a particular line or a particular club should not be made unless invited, and such general and purely gratuitous advice as "Be sure to be up," or "Anywhere except above the hole" is much more strongly to be deprecated. When there is great disparity in skill and experience between the two partners, the better of the two may perhaps give himself a little more licence, but he must go very warily to work and avoid all appearance either of hectoring or patronising.

On many courses there is something like an established custom that the stronger player shall drive at the odd or even holes, as the case may be. As it is the fruit of long experience it is probably sound, but it must not be too blindly followed. As far as possible it is founded on the theory that the better player should take the more difficult tee shots, and especially the majority of the one-shot holes which call as a rule for accuracy. At the same time those important shots, the second shots up to the hole, have also to be taken into account.

The conventional scheme usually assumes that the

weaker player is the shorter driver: he generally is so, but not always. If he can drive as far as his partner, another division of tee shots may be preferable. An apparently paradoxical plan, but one for which there is a good deal to be said, is to assign the easier tee shots to the more accurate player. There are some golfers who, given a reasonably wide margin of space, can be relied on to keep the ball on the fairway. If they are given the easy shots, here is a solid foundation on which the side may build their hopes. With luck they will at any rate have seven or eight tee shots out of harm's way. If that accurate player be given the difficult and narrow shots, he may several times be not quite accurate enough and so be just trapped. In such a case a miss is often as good as a mile, and his wilder partner, though going perhaps more crooked, might have been no more expensive to the partnership. The question is perhaps a more difficult one than it used to be, because the number of one-shot holes is greater and our architects guard them more and more fiercely. At Addington, for instance, there are six one-shot holes and they are all odd numbers, so that one partner has a heavy responsibility to bear. Not long ago I watched Taylor, most accurate of all golfers, playing in a foursome on his own Mid-Surrey. There are on that course three holes which can be reached with an iron club from the tee—the fifth, eighth, and eleventh. Taylor drove at the odd holes and so got two of them. At the fifth he was short and bunkered: at the eleventh, by way of compensation, he was over the green. All his tee shots at the longer holes flew straight down the middle of the course and were never

in sight of trouble. The illustration is a quaint rather than a convincing one, for Taylor would very seldom do such a thing, and when I am next honoured by having him for a partner I shall certainly urge him to take the short holes. I give it, however, as an example of how accuracy might sometimes be best used by not putting it to the severest test.

Of course in many foursomes the two partners are about equal in strength and skill. In that case it does not greatly matter where they drive. If possible they must find out whether either one of them has a distinct fancy for or aversion from taking either the odds or the evens. If either feels at all strongly on the subject, the other had better yield. So terribly much depends in golf on this "feeling" that we are going to hit the ball—or to miss it. And that is worth remembering all through a foursome. Our partner, let us say, proposes to play his own patent full mashie shot at a short hole, and asks us to confirm his judgment. We have been brought up to believe perhaps that a full mashie shot is intrinsically criminal: we may also think that he will not quite get up with it. But we shall be unwise to let him see what is passing in our minds. If he plays his immoral shot he will most likely put the ball on the near edge of the green, and that will be something. If we urge on him the merits of a controlled iron shot he may be up indeed, but also forty yards off the line in a bunker. A man's scheme of approaching, as Sir Walter Simpson has said, is known only to himself and his caddie. Half-shots, push-shots, three-quarter-shots—these are only private and personal labels that we attach to our strokes in our

own minds. To another man the words may convey something quite different. Unless we know the man and his iron play through and through we had better let him go his own way, except when he does not know the course and so is palpably at sea about the distances.

This chapter would be both unchivalrous and incomplete without some allusion to mixed foursomes. I do not mean a foursome in which an ordinary man, trembling at the honour done him, is led out like a lamb to the slaughter to play with some such mighty golferess as Miss Cecil Leitch. I am thinking rather of the everyday mixed foursome in which the man, bad as he may be, is yet not so bad as his partner and will have to shoulder most of the responsibility and hard slogging. I have not a very large experience, but once by the aid of an admirable partner and a liberal handicap I defeated a rather effeminate Bogey and won a silver match-box. On that happy occasion, and also on others, I came to this rather ungallant conclusion—that the lady does her full duty if she hits her tee shots straight and into the air and putts steadily. Through the green she should adopt a negative policy; it is of paramount importance that she should do as little mischief as possible. This is not so ungenerous a remark as it appears, because the way of the average lady through the green on a long, difficult course must be a very hard one. She is very much at the mercy of the lies she gets. She may be intrinsically quite as good a golfer as her partner, but if she gets a cuppy lie, or a heavy or a hanging one, she often has not the strength to tear the ball away.

In such circumstances she is apt to top. With his lady partner in a bad lie and a cross-bunker in front, the man should consider whether he dare suggest playing short or round. If he dare not, let him close his eyes and pray: it is the only resource left to him. His own task is not an easy one. He must cover all the distance he possibly can and yet he, too, must keep out of trouble, for once a lady (and again I am not talking of champions and their like) gets into a bunker, she is apt to stay there. Even as a large tail may seem to wag a small dog, so does a heavy niblick swing a weak-wristed lady.

A mixed foursome of not too severe a kind is best arranged on the basis that each sex shall drive from its own tees. If a lady drives from the men's tees there will almost certainly be some holes, particularly against the wind, where she will have to take a mashie shot from the tee or go for an impossible carry. The first plan deprives her of her legitimate share of fun and makes the purpose of winning disproportionately important: the second means hard labour with the niblick for her partner. I think many of us scarcely realise what a difference forward tees make and what crushed worms we should feel if we were put back to tees suited only to a giant. It is an illuminating fact that four set matches have been played between teams of very good male amateurs and proportionately good ladies. Three have been played at Stoke Poges. The men gave the odds of half a stroke, and both parties drove from the men's tees. I feel bound to add that these tees were not selected with any mistaken chivalry, but with the notion of making the course as

difficult as might be. In each of those three matches the men won against almost the full strength of female golf. How they did it I do not know, though I took part in the triumph. We always expected to be beaten, but somehow we were not. In the fourth match, on the other hand, which took place at Worpleston, the ladies received no strokes but played from forward tees specially made for the occasion. How far forward depended on the length of the hole, and at the eleventh hole, over five hundred yards long, they had a start of more than a hundred yards. This time the ladies won and, as far as I could judge, came far nearer to playing their own proper game, the wonderfully good game that they play against one another in their own Championships. As a body they have never played nearly up to their form in the Stoke matches, because they were doubly overpowered from the tee by the length of their enemies' hitting and the length of the carries they had to attempt.

This is not written in an arrogant spirit. I intend rather to implant humility in my own breast and those of other men. When we are long enough and strong enough to get over a bunker easily, we have nothing to grow conceited over because we hit a good tee shot. But when we know that our best tee shot will only get over by inches rather than feet, then it is the devil and all. We do not even do our puny best. Let us take the moral to heart against our next mixed foursome.



ANY one who has watched much golf has only to shut his eyes in order to see pass before him in a long procession the great players of his time. He sees their characteristic clothes, the very angles of their pipes, their attitudes as they hit the ball or gaze after it in its flight, urging it this way or that with unconscious movements of the club, or stand waiting for the enemy's shot. They flow on and on in a long stream, and he watches them with a pleasant, dreamy feeling, with now and then a sudden thrill, and sometimes a pang of regret that he can hardly hope to see some of them again inside the rope with the tramp, tramp of a big crowd behind them.

First of all in my own particular procession is the figure of Willie Fernie, the open champion of 1883, who was the professional at Felixstowe when I began to play there as a very little boy. He stands at the door of his shop, close to the first green and opposite the Martello tower, in a white apron and a curious yachting cap with a shiny peak, and brandishes a half-finished wooden club in his strong wrists. That picture flits away, as it might on a cinematograph, and there follows another of Fernie switching the ball away with a swing which for graceful ease and dash and flick of the wrist seems to me even now not to have been surpassed. Next to him is Mr. Mure Fergusson,

who used to come down to play at Felixstowe occasionally, to be gazed at by me with eyes of unspeakable awe. I have seen him play very often since then, but still retain a quite separate and boyish vision of him hitting what seemed a superhuman tee shot from the first tee. I have, too, a perhaps more characteristic impression of him, standing up solid and determined to a short putt and looking as if nothing in the world could possibly prevent his holing it. Somebody once said that if he had a putt of six feet or so to win a match on the last green and was allowed to get any other golfer to hole it for him, he would without a moment's hesitation appoint Mr. Fergusson. It was a fine compliment and well deserved. No one else used to look quite so supremely confident at that distance at a critical moment, and never was confidence better justified. The ball seemed to have no other course except to dash itself against the back of the tin and then fall limply into the hole.

Every one must have some such early memories which he feels, unjustifiably no doubt, to be his very own and nobody else's. In the procession which is common to any golfing dreamer, we must assume that three golfers in particular will more often lead the way than any others. Needless to say the three are the "Triumvirate"—Harry Vardon, James Braid, and J. H. Taylor. Everybody has seen them play and knows what they have done. Duncan has analysed the very different ways in which each of the three gets his results. It remains for me to try to give some kind of impression of them as human beings as well as golfers. Harry Vardon always seems to me to play

as if he enjoyed the game most: Taylor as if he enjoyed it least: Braid as if he took it as part of the day's work. Yet all those three statements need qualification. Vardon never for a moment allows himself to play carelessly, as an amateur does when he is enjoying the game. He is always careful and determined, but there is an air of serenity about him, born perhaps of his perfect smoothness and grace of style, which belongs to no one else. Mr. Hutchinson once wrote of Vardon's method of play that he bore himself with a "gay and gallant courage," and I would not venture to attempt any improvement on the phrase. Nobody could play as he does without having thought a great deal about the game. Yet he gives the impression of having discovered the best and simplest way of doing everything by the light of nature. His hands look just a little more perfectly dovetailed, the one into the other, than do anybody else's, and no one has at once so completely comfortable and yet commanding a stance to the ball. Of all golfers he and Mr. John Ball always look to me as if one had only to turn a key in their insides, as in a mechanical toy, to make them go on swinging the club perfectly easily and truly to the end of time.

I said that Taylor seemed to enjoy the game least of the three. That does not imply that he looks unhappy: rather that he seems always to be going at top speed. The high pressure in his case is palpable. Enjoyment is in any case altogether too inadequate a word to apply to him. A soldier rushing on his enemy with a bayonet and proposing to stick it into him may feel a savage joy, but it cannot be called enjoyment.

When things have gone ill with him and he has pulled the battle round and is fighting his way home in triumph, Taylor looks transfigured or exalted. No milder word will do. He wears this look most clearly when he is not fighting a human opponent, but rather himself and the wind and the weather. One would expect so terrible a fighter to love match play best, but it is not so. I have even heard Taylor say that he cannot play a match. That is, with all respect to him, absurd, but he plays a scoring round even better than he does a match. Then all his pugnacity—and he has plenty of it—can find a vent not on one wretched opponent but on the universe. He will tell you that he hates a match, because he cannot help feeling moments of good nature in the course of it and is sorry for them afterwards. Perhaps this may be the right explanation, that he finds it easier to be entirely relentless against an entirely abstract foe; or perhaps his mind is so tremendously concentrated on his own shots that he is a little disturbed and thrown out of his stride by having to consider some one else. This power of intense concentration and a sometimes almost furious resolution not to be beaten are his two great moral assets. They are in him part of a temperament which in any other man would be said to be a very bad one for golf, for it is the temperament of a poet. There was surely never a more emotional golfer, but he has, to a greater extent perhaps than any other player, made these superficially annoying emotions of his into valuable and obedient servants. How often they try to rebel we do not know, but we can

make a shrewd guess and feel the greater respect for their master.

I said that Braid seemed to take the game as part of his day's work. So he does, but I should add that it is with the never-failing zest and interest that a good workman always takes in his work. I have never seen any one so clearly determined not for one moment to allow himself to grow bored or careless. Play with or against him in the mildest of after-lunch four-somes, and let him be five up with six to play. He will still walk the whole length of a long putt with that slow, swinging stride to look at the line from the hole, and he will try as hard to lay the ball dead as if his life depended on it. A very charming lady once played a foursome at Walton Heath with Braid for a partner. Time after time she toppled the ball a few yards with her beautiful new clubs, and time after time Braid, out of all sorts of lies, sent the ball hurtling enormous distances down the course. At last with her tee shot to the eleventh hole she was unlucky, and the ball at the end of its brief journey finished in a small bush. Braid surveyed it carefully, where it nestled among the roots of the bush "looking," as one who was present described it, "like a wren's egg." Then taking his heaviest niblick he demolished the bush and sent the ball some thirty yards. It was a really prodigious feat, but his partner had never seen him hit such a short distance before. "Well, Mr. Braid," she said with an engaging smile, "it is a comfort to see that even you can miss a shot sometimes."

Braid can miss a shot sometimes, though he did not miss that one, and when he does the ball has a

habit of going to very curious places. Vardon's very rare bad shot is hardly ever destructive: his swing seems too true and easy to permit anything very dreadful to happen to him. Braid's crooked shot is conceived on a bolder and more glorious scale. It is often only his amazing powers of recovery that prevent it from being very destructive indeed. It is this very occasional but magnificent aberration that helps to make him a player of vivid contrasts. His whole manner of playing the game, when he is not actually making a stroke, is so sedate and careful—his whole manner of hitting so full of divine fury. Taylor clearly "means wenom." He looks as if he intended to hurt the ball, but Braid looks as if he intended to lash it off the face of the earth, to kill it outright. His very waggle is menacing: there is a little additional shake of the club-head which warns us that something terrific is coming and makes us cower involuntarily. And then the moment it is all over he relapses almost into benignity.

We cannot separate these great three from Sandy Herd, who has fought them so often and so hard, and will be divided from them in golfing history by so small a gap. The gap would have been smaller still, perhaps there would be none at all, if Herd had been able to bear prosperity as well as he does adversity. There is no more courageous or dour fighter. It is only sometimes when he stands "a tip-toe on the highest point of being," the palm of victory almost in his grasp, that he just fails. He seems now and again unable to wait for the round to finish itself out and allow victory to come surely if slowly: he wants to

hurry on the great moment and then sometimes it has delayed to come altogether. There is no more transparently sincere player. There is no mask upon his face: we know when he is sorry and when he is glad and when he is excited; never when he is frightened, for he is as brave as a lion. To see him, when he has just pulled a hard fight out of the fire, take out his pipe, light it and puff at it, is one of the pleasantest sights in all golf. It makes one for the moment feel as contented as if one had won the match oneself.

If there is no more straightforward golfer, so, in a sense, is there no one more dramatic. His many waggles, so full of purpose, work one up to an acute state of expectancy: the gesticulations of his club, after the ball has gone on its way, impart to us much of his own anxiety as to its fate. Herd, though he may not know it, is furnishing, as he urges on his sluggish ball towards the hole, material of intense interest to the anthropologist by "indulging in an interesting form of primitive ritual." He is trying to make the ball reach the hole by means of "sympathetic magic," which is, as I have been informed by a lady of European reputation, "in its ultimate analysis an utterance, a discharge of emotion and longing." She has pointed out that the watcher of a lawn-tennis match does "in sheer sympathy the thing he wants done . . . raising an unoccupied leg to help the suspended ball over the net." There is no doubt what Sandy Herd wants done when he waves his club at the ball. The only wonder is that there is ever found a ball with the hardihood to disobey him. And now at fifty-two, or is it fifty-three, years old, he is as keen and as full of cheerful fight

as ever—a great golfer who might possibly have been a greater, but could not have been a more interesting one.

There are other famous professionals and a good deal to say about them, but my procession of great golfers follows no definite rules and there come now into my mind some famous amateurs. At the present moment our amateur golf is in a rather curious and chaotic state. One might almost choose a team of twenty or even thirty, put them in order and spin a coin to decide which should be the top of the list and which the bottom. There are many who hit the ball beautifully for a while, but those who are consistently better than their fellows it is hard to name. It used not to be so. One reason is of course that to-day there are many more golfers, but apart from that there are not for the time being any unquestionably outstanding figures. When I first began to take a juvenile interest in golf there were three very great names, and two more only a little less awe-inspiring. The three were Mr. John Ball (I am not sure if he was then *tertius* or *junior*), Mr. Horace Hutchinson, and Mr. J. E. Laidlay, and the other two were Mr. Leslie Balfour and Mr. Mure Fergusson. A little later came Mr. Hilton and the late Mr. F. G. Tait, and these two seemed gradually to oust Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Laidlay, and join Mr. Ball as the persons of a great trinity. Again a little later—and I come now to my own contemporaries—there arrived the late Mr. Jack Graham and Mr. Maxwell. There have been other fine players, some of them no doubt quite as good as one or two of those I have mentioned: yet for one rea-



son or other, perhaps because they were born at the wrong time, they seem to me never to have been surrounded by quite the same exclusive glamour. Two out of my nine never won a championship, but they will always be for me the high gods among amateurs. Everybody else, whatever he may do, will have something earthly and human about him. So I shall follow my own bent and take my sacred nine in a body.

Mr. Ball must come first. Through the mists of golfing history he will always loom, a towering and colossal figure round which legends will cluster. Those who were his contemporaries and had to fight him in the early days of the Championship tell us, who are younger, that we have never seen the greatest John Ball of all, who could suddenly, at a supreme crisis, strike a blow that nothing could ward off. Probably they are right. To us of a younger generation Mr. Ball stands for flawlessness rather than overwhelming brilliance, for the perfection of grace rather than crushing power. We think of him as a master who will very likely only show his supreme mastery if he is stung into doing so. We have often seen him play the game of cat and mouse with an opponent, not out of the cruelty of a cat, but rather from a tolerant kindness towards the mouse. He seems to enjoy, certainly not to dislike, ending a match very near home. It must be admitted that it is very hard to tell, for not only has he in the highest degree the art which conceals his art, but he has also a stoical and impenetrable way with him that conceals all emotion, except perhaps from those who know him very well indeed.

It is odd to reflect nowadays that when the Amateur Championship first began Mr. Ball could not do himself justice on the big occasion, to the despair of of all Hoylake. Since those days he has gained so great a name as a fighter, which implies a certain number of mistakes to be recovered from, that it has more than equalled his name as a golfer pure and simple. We have seen him get out of tight corners so wonderfully, that we a little forget all the occasions when he has gone on his way down the exact centre of the course rejoicing, and the only tight corner has been that in which the opponent found himself without getting out of it. Just as a great fast bowler frightens out some of his victims purely by his fame, so Mr. Ball's reputation as a die-hard has, I suspect, made some of his adversaries collapse out of sheer terror when they found themselves with a lead. I shall always remember a match that he played against Mr. Bond, a very sturdy player, at Westward Ho! in 1912. Mr. Bond was, I think, five up with seven to play. He lost a couple of holes, but still he was three up with three to play. How he must have longed for some other pursuer on his track and some other hole to play just at that moment! That short sixteenth is always a nasty hole whereat to follow a shot that has reached the green, and it was a hole made for Mr. Ball who at such a crisis was certain to be on the green. Of course, he was on it—close to the hole. How rock-like he looked on his feet and how the ball flew straight as an arrow from the bow! Mr. Bond was bunkered, and after that it seemed certain that Mr. Ball would win the match. It is no disrespect to Mr. Bond to say so, for

one would have felt the same at that moment about almost any other golfer. Mr. Ball did win the next two holes and he won the nineteenth hole, all three played with absolute and faultless steadiness, and in the end he won the Championship. I have described elsewhere one or two of his far more famous matches, but none of them have ever impressed me more than this now half-forgotten one.

Dogged does not somehow seem the right epithet to apply to a golfer who has the most beautifully easy swing in the world, for it implies some sort of effort. Mr. Ball's style is effortless, and yet dogged I must call him. There are many good golfers who can bear the strain of a hard finish, but I can think of none quite so well able to grin and bear it. He seems to me like some gallant old fighter in the days of Boxiana, who wrenches out a loosened tooth, and then leaps off his second's knee for the next round, smiling with cracked and bleeding lips.

Mr. Ball is so interesting to watch as a match-player that one forgets to watch him purely as a player of strokes. At least, of all the great golfers I have watched, I think I find it hardest to arrive at any conclusion as to "how he does it." With that wonderfully smooth swing, all his different strokes seem to melt imperceptibly into one another, and as he passes on before my mind's eye, silent, with head bent forward, he seems to me something of a great mystery as well as a very great golfer.

I quoted at the beginning of this chapter the saying that if one was allowed to delegate the holing of a short putt at a crisis to somebody else, Mr. Mure

Fergusson was the man to send for. I think that in similar circumstances one of my own very first choices would be that of Mr. Horace Hutchinson. Like everybody else, I suppose, he had his off-days on the green, but he holed a vast number of putts, and hit the ball so boldly with that tap of his and kept his wrists so loose and free; no mental strain could tighten them too much. Moreover, he could, when in the mood for it, play a match in what I hope he will forgive me for calling a sort of cold anger. It made him a great fighter at a pinch. I suppose, however, he will chiefly go down to posterity, apart, of course, from his delightful writing, as the golfer who could play the most incredible shots out of the most incredible places. For a ball down a drain or on a roof or in the branches of a tree, there has been nobody quite like him. Braid can do wonderful things: he could no doubt remove more of the tree, but Mr. Hutchinson would probably play the ball out without ruffling a branch or disturbing a bird on its nest. With that very loose style of his he appeared to be able to swing the club at will in any plane or direction. His style was not superficially an easy one: it was rather complicated and did not apparently make the game an easy one, but it was endlessly adaptable. Who else could, as he did, take to a driver some six inches longer than he had used before and straightway drive far and sure with it? Mr. Hutchinson did this after he had been rather badly beaten by Mr. Maxwell in the final at Muirfield in 1903, when he came to the conclusion that the younger man was driving inconveniently far. So Jack Rowe made him this mighty club, some forty-six inches from

the heel to the top of the shaft, and his swing looked more lissome and juvenile than ever. Who else again at the dreaded little "Island" hole at Ashdown would let the mashie play quite loosely about in his right hand, now in the fingers and now in the web of the thumb, and stop the ball by the hole as if it had a string tied to it? It was a feat, to use one of his own phrases, of "young, insolent fearlessness." On that same Ashdown he would take his brassy or a curious spoon of aluminium to a ball in the heather, that cried aloud for the niblick, and witch it away. There have been better players, though there would have been fewer had not Mr. Hutchinson been a rather sick man, but there have been none, to me, more thrilling or more clearly endowed with magic. Once he passed by the "Paradise" Green at Eastbourne and god-like looked down to praise a pitch played by a young person of fourteen who has been his slave ever since.

If Mr. Laidlay is ever canonised he will certainly be represented on a stained-glass window with a little light lofted putting cleek, much worn by cleaning, in his hand, and on the scroll underneath it will be written, "I must trust to a pitch and a putt." In his comparatively old age Mr. Laidlay has basely given up his old cleek and taken to a more modern putter of aluminium. He putts very well with it, holding it low down in an unorthodox manner, appearing to move his body, which is also unorthodox, and soothing the ball into the hole. But this is all a horrid dream, and we must continue to think of him with his childhood's cleek.

"A long steal" is a golfing expression that does not seem to be so much used as it once was. Is it that there is nobody to-day so capable of playing it? At any rate, it is one peculiarly applicable to Mr. Laidlay. No man, I imagine, ever stole more holes than the other man thought he had safely in his pocket. One has always a picture of him arriving close to the hole from a horribly long way off with a diabolical pitch-and-run shot. The ball seems sure to be short, but it creeps on and on till it ends close to the hole. When I have watched him or played with him he has always missed or rather half-missed just enough wooden club shots to make his iron play the more tantalising. And those iron shots are played not in the modern and hideously efficient fashion with a firm dunch and a divot, but in a silky, insinuating way with the lightest and most delicate of grips. In Mr. Laidlay we see, I think, the manner of one who is an artist to his finger-tips, combined with a temperament eminently robust and practical. It is a very formidable alliance.

Robust seems a good word to apply to the golf of Mr. Leslie Balfour-Melville and Mr. Mure Fergusson, but in many ways their games were and are quite unlike each other. Mr. Balfour-Melville strikes one as an eminently natural player to whom the game came easily, for he has played almost every game very well. But he has overlaid, as it were, his natural game with a veneer of intense carefulness and concentration. He tries so hard that one notices this first and his natural genius for hitting any kind of ball afterwards. There never was a keener player nor a more perennially youthful one, and when he is in the eighties instead of

the sixties he will still be trying the swing of the open champion of those days, who is now probably in petticoats. Mr. Everard was a true prophet when in the "Badminton Library" he foretold that of the great players of that time—thirty years ago—Mr. Balfour-Melville would most successfully retain his game in later life. He based his prophecy on the trueness of the swing, but he must also surely have been thinking of that splendid and irrepressible youthfulness.

Mr. Mure Fergusson is also clearly a natural player, but with less faultless and orthodox and more palpably individual methods. There is not so much of carefulness in his game, but a very great deal of determination. In him, if ever there was one, we see the "dour" player. Not only is he one who will never admit defeat. If one seems him, as occasionally one may, among the pinewoods of "New Zealand," one feels that he would not even admit that he ought not to have got there. It seems a hard fate that though Mr. Fergusson has a great reputation for holding critical putts, the one putt of his that will be best remembered is one that he missed. This was in 1898 in the St. George's Vase at Sandwich. He was playing with Mr. Tait: all day he had clung to him: with one hole to play the two were all square, well ahead of the field, and after each had played three shots Mr. Tait was away at the back of the green near the railings and Mr. Fergusson lay apparently dead. Then the one holed his long putt over hill and dale and the other missed his short one. If there are such things as unlucky golfers, Mr. Fergusson is one of them. The list of Amateur Champions does not seem quite complete without his name.

I have given some description elsewhere of one or two of Mr. Tait's great matches, but though I remember those matches well, I do not feel competent to analyse him as a golfer. He died some twenty years ago, and I hope I know more about golf now than I did then. History and legend has most to tell of his recoveries, but the impression in my mind is rather of easy and powerful accuracy, that called for no recoveries, except when that ugly right hand underneath the shaft asserted itself and made them necessary. I never saw any one who seemed more clearly to be playing "within himself" nor with a more radiant confidence, and the boldness of his putting was unforgettable. More than anything else, however, I remember the worship of him by the Scottish crowd. For a dog-like devotion to its hero combined with hostility and a touch of contempt towards other people it was unique. Few could have borne it so lightly and so engagingly.

With Mr. Harold Hilton we come to the best of all amateur score players, and perhaps the most interesting of all golfers, amateur or professional, one who has devoted to the game with extraordinary single-mindedness of purpose a very shrewd intelligence and a very close power of observation. Somebody once wrote of Mr. Hilton that he had "slaved" at the game when he was young. It is a statement that is in a sense quite true, and yet this verb, just ill-chosen, conveys entirely the wrong impression. It gives a picture of one with little natural gift for the game toiling at it gloomily, to arrive at length at a respectable mediocrity. Mr. Hilton would have been a fine golfer if he



had never thought about the game at all. Because he did think about it and look at it with those wonderfully observant eyes, he became a great one. I have never met any one who was so catholic in his taste for observation. He will point out something that is new to us about the style of any golfing acquaintance, eked out with little imitative movements, inarticulate but most expressive; and if now and then we may think that he refines too subtly, we had better be sure that it is not we who do not know enough. If, moreover, he watches golf with a very studious eye, he also watches it with a twinkling one, and no one gets more quiet amusement out of it.

Mr. Hilton won two Open Championships and, only through one dreadful disaster at a single hole, just failed to win a third before he ever won the Amateur Championship. That is a curious record, and it may possibly be responsible for his going down to posterity as a bad match player. If it does it will do him some injustice. That he could not, or at any rate he did not, play well in matches against Mr. Tait is indisputable. Most golfers have some player who establishes an ascendancy over them but the general public is none the wiser. This particular instance was conspicuous because the two ran into one another so often. Leaving it on one side, I do not think that there were ever many people over anxious to meet Mr. Hilton in a match, save only in this sense that one has a better chance against a better player than oneself in an eighteen-hole match than in thirty-six or seventy-two holes with a card and pencil. Mr. Hilton does not look exuberantly happy at the finish

of a hard match, but neither do most other people, and he has played some very great shots, especially with those wooden clubs of his, at extraordinarily unpleasant moments. Take, just as one instance, his last two holes in the Championship of 1901 against Mr. Low at St. Andrews, after being pulled down from five up to all square. Whether if Mr. Hilton had a mind less quick and imaginative he would have been a more successful golfer than he has been, is an open question. Personally I doubt it very much. I think that what he has lost on the swings he has gained on the roundabouts: nor would I exchange the highly-strung player, who can take a grip of himself, for Sir Walter Simpson's "Sallow dull-eyed fellow with a quid in his cheek." At any rate, the fact that Mr. Hilton has some degree of "temperament" has given him a very clear knowledge of what is going on in his opponent's head and made him a very human golfer.

With Mr. Robert Maxwell and the late Mr. Jack Graham we come to two golfers of whom their friends will always declare that the best of them has never been seen in public. This is, of course, especially true of Mr. Graham, who never won a Championship, but it is also true of Mr. Maxwell who has won two. The best rounds that he has ever played have been, as we are told, when he was playing the best of some three or four balls round North Berwick or Muirfield in a friendly game. No golfer has ever established a more complete reign of terror among his friends, nor has been regarded by them with a more whole-hearted admiration. A great many people say they hate crowds and championships, but if a crowd will look at them

they are not so very ill-pleased after all; but Mr. Maxwell has a thoroughly genuine dislike to all the fuss and the ropes and the stewards and the reporters and the cheers and the speeches and everything else to do with a big match. Yet he has done great things despite them all, hardening his heart to go through with it, and fighting his way along with a resolute and glowering air. When he gets away with a lead he can be impeccable and irresistible for long, long spells at a time. When he played Mr. Ball at Muirfield in the International Match of 1903, the day after he had won the Championship, he was a relentless Juggernaut trampling down all before him. And as to his Championship match of 1909 against Major Hutchison, there have been few better finishes at a pinch than his three and four for the last two holes at Muirfield in a wind.

Mr. Maxwell's game presents some striking contrasts. His long game is forceful and almost brutal: no one plays a more formidable "dunch" with the driving iron nor excises a larger divot from the hapless turf. Yet when he gets near the hole he reveals himself the possessor of a fine touch, and a certain shot, with which he strokes—it is the only word—the ball out of a bunker, used to be called his "Pussy-cat" shot. In this respect he is a little like another strong man and strong player, Edward Ray, but the resemblance is quite superficial. There is really no player that I know of in the least like Mr. Maxwell, and I doubt if there ever will be.

Mr. Graham's death still seems so recent that it is difficult to write about him, nor shall I try to allocate him an exact place in the roll of golfers. With

his hands held very far back, the right foot far forward and the curious little jump on to his toes before taking back the club, his is a wonderfully clear picture that can be summoned at will. If Mr. Graham had ever won the Championship, not only Hoylake but the whole golfing world would have overflowed with rejoicings, and, delightfully modest though he was, I have no doubt he knew this perfectly well and it made things harder for him. The way in which year after year he would annihilate some wretched Englishman in the International Match and then fade away towards the end of the Championship was really heart-breaking, but there never could be a better loser. One sometimes fancied that he felt a kind of relief when, his own match being over, he plunged unselfishly and energetically into the duties of a fore caddie to some other match. He seemed never really to watch a match; he just marked down the two balls from tee shots and then raced forward again.

That Mr. Graham was a very wonderful player is sure, and when we think of what he did and might have done we must always remember how comparatively little golf he played. He worked hard all the week: there is no Sunday golf at Hoylake, and, moreover, he played other games besides golf and played them very well. I should doubt if, except at the time of a Championship, he ever played anything like a week's continuous golf. If he had not been so typically an amateur, he would no doubt have left a bigger mark in the records of big events; but whatever he might have done, he never could have left a more unforgettable or pleasanter memory.

To these sketches of nine British amateurs—there are some more to come—I am inclined to add here one of a very interesting American player, Mr. Jerome Travers. Of Mr. Ouimet, whom I saw beat Vardon and Ray in 1913, I shall say something in another chapter. In that same year I watched Mr. Travers win the American Amateur Championship at Garden City, and it was one of the most remarkable possible achievements. It was not remarkable that he should win, for he was a strong favourite and had been playing very well. But it is remarkable for a man to win a championship who for the time being not only dare not use his wooden clubs from the tee, but is suffering from a bad attack of “socketing” with his mashie. This was Mr. Travers’s case. He began by only qualifying in the score play rounds by the skin of his teeth. In every match he played he hit one or two mashie shots towards cover point off the extreme heel of his mashie, and whenever he had a try with a wooden club he hooked the ball “round his neck.” Yet he won in a field of good players—and we know now how good American amateurs are—and won pretty comfortably. It was a supreme display of putting and resolution. I have never seen such putting, unless it was that of Mr. Travis at Sandwich in 1904, nor any better match-playing. No man keeps a tighter hold on himself than Mr. Travers: he is determination not to be beaten personified. Yet with all his concentration he plays tricks that are audacious. Though he could not get on with his wooden clubs he was always anxious to have one more try, and in some of his matches, as soon as he got a short lead, out

would come the errant driver. This generally resulted in the lead being diminished or even vanishing altogether, and then Mr. Travers would very calmly and philosophically put away the driver and batter the ball once more down the fairway with his heavy iron. It is always dangerous to play cat and mouse with an opponent. It is very unsettling to most people's game to try experiments with clubs in the middle of a match; the well-behaved club, that is put away for a few holes, is apt to prove sulky and resentful and behave well no longer. A golfer who can run both these risks must have a serene confidence and a power of putting at will disturbing considerations out of mind. Mr. Travers has both these gifts in a high degree. No one's nerve is always proof, and Mr. Travers had a surprising collapse in our Amateur Championship of 1914; but though as a player of strokes he has obvious limitations, as a player of matches he is an astonishing person.

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## *Chapter VI. Great Golfers (continued)*

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Now let us come back to the professionals again, beginning with George Duncan, and I shall not let him see what I have said about him till it is safely in print. Having first of all read his chapters in this book, you will realise that he is an enthusiast for the subtle points of the game and a wonderfully close observer of other people's shots, who will go into fine shades with Mr. Hilton himself. Perhaps, however, his modesty has a little prevented your finding out what an introspective player he is as regards his own methods. I never met any one who combined his astonishing dash, rapidity, and naturalness with an acute consciousness of what he is doing. It amuses him to play a sort of game of pretending with himself in which he impersonates for the day some other great player, much as a child crawls beneath a table with a toy gun under the blissful impression that he is a Red Indian. It is said that once Duncan, having played some particularly good shot in a match, exclaimed joyfully, "Didn't I play that exactly like Massy?" Perhaps the story is not true, but I like it so much that I am taking care not to ask him. This much is certainly true, that Duncan in talking about a match played some time ago will recall precisely what was his scheme of wooden club play or iron play or both on that particular day: how he was driving "with the

hands leading a little," and playing his pitches "back here on the right foot like Taylor" or "forward like Mr. Hilton."

A good many golfers indulge in this amusement to some extent, but in their case it generally does more harm than good. They exaggerate, they grow laborious, their minds become so full of their various impersonations that they have to go on waggling and waggling while they say to themselves, "What the devil am I supposed to be doing this time?" Whatever Duncan may be thinking or pretending to himself, he always plays like a flash of greased lightning. True, he is just a little slower than he used to be. With all his speed there is to-day a certain air of deliberateness about him that used not to be there, and with it has come his greater steadiness: but nothing in the world can make him hang over the shot as if his mind were not quite made up.

The most brilliant golf that I ever saw Duncan—or any one else—play was in the *Daily Mail* Tournament at Westward Ho! last summer, when he had four rounds of that terrific course at full stretch in 291—three over an average of fours. It was at the end of the second or third round, and on the way to the seventeenth hole, that he appeared deep in thought and trying some experimental little waggles with his brassy as he walked. Suddenly he declared that he knew there was something a little wrong with his timing (his round was a 73 or so), and happy in this new discovery he dashed on to the eighteenth tee and hit a most prodigious tee shot to prove his point to himself. A golfer who indulges in these pleasant little



vagaries of imagination in the middle of a strenuous conflict clearly has the artistic temperament fully developed. It has helped to make Duncan the player he is and, since such a temperament has the defects of its qualities, it also for a long time prevented him from doing himself full justice. To the golfer who is almost too much of an artist a bad shot is not merely a regrettable incident that loses a hole or a stroke: it appears a horrid blot that spoils the whole beauty of his work of art. Duncan had a hard row to hoe before he at length developed in himself the right measure of philosophy which takes things as they come. That he has now done so he has shown many times, but particularly on two occasions last summer. The first was at Westward Ho! when he bore with equanimity a winning lead that seemed for one brief but difficult moment to be fading away. The second was at Deal in the Open Championship, when after a most disappointing first day which had apparently thrown him out of the running, he came again with a long-sustained spurt on the second.

The name of Abe Mitchell goes naturally with that of Duncan to-day. A less imaginative player, and one with less power and wish to tell what he imagines, he is much more sphinx-like than Duncan, but he is not altogether, as some people might think, a "Sphinx without a secret." Mitchell has a remarkable natural gift for playing golf, but he would never have improved as he has done merely by turning from amateur to professional unless he had thought hard and observed closely. The nature of any individual golfer's game depends a good deal as a rule on the course

where he was bred. Mitchell was always a deft player of short pitches because he had plenty of pitching to do on Ashdown Forest. He was originally not a good player of the longer iron shots, because he had so few of them to play there. But the rule breaks down badly over his driving. Ashdown is not a long course, and at many holes there are belts of heather across the fairway, which a driver of very ordinary powers will often reach from the tee. As to Mitchell, he was, of course, constantly reaching them, and this might, as one would have imagined, have had some shortening effect on his tee shots. But the natural genius for hitting appallingly hard was so strong in him that it could not and would not be cramped. He is a much more accurate hitter now, but he drove quite as far in his amateur days at Ashdown as ever he has done since.

There is something about Mitchell's holing of short putts that always seems to me indicative of strong character. Most of us at a certain short range from the hole say to ourselves that we are "dead," but we do not act as if we thought so. We talk glibly about the back of the tin, but the ball dribbles in, if at all, at the nearest edge of the hole. Now Mitchell really does give the ball what the Private Secretary called "a good hard knock": and he very, very seldom fails to do so, even when he has an off-day on the green. This is not only a valuable power in itself, but it implies a fine determined spirit in playing the game.

If—and it is very doubtful—there is any one who can outdrive Mitchell, it is Edward Ray. Ray is so large and hits so hard, smokes so many pipes and looks so casual over it all, that he gives the impression

of a happy-go-lucky golfer; but in this appearances are deceptive. He has an admirable power of taking the rough with the smooth and, just because he hits so far, the rough is for him apt to be very rough indeed; but I think he tries as hard as anybody to keep on the smooth and, whatever he once did, he now succeeds extremely often. If Ray does not strike one as pre-eminently an artist, he is an extraordinarily efficient workman. Moreover, there is a good deal of concealed art in those mountainous approaches of his, played so accurately with a graduated armoury of niblicks. Perhaps some onlookers fancy that if they were only as strong as Ray, approaching would lose most of its terrors, since it would be so easy just to bang the ball up with a niblick, but they would soon find out they were wrong. Ray is a natural player who has stuck to his own very individual style. That does not mean that he does not know plenty about it and about other people's style as well.

Ray with his pipe, and his hat on the back of his head, looks the part of the good-natured giant to perfection. Another big, strong man, Arnaud Massy, looks it, too, but in his case there is an added something of fine, swashbuckling fierceness. To be seen at his best, both as a golfer and a picturesque personage, Massy must be studied in a wind. He was bred in a home of the winds, Biarritz, and before one Championship he expressed the wish that it would blow hard enough to blow down every tree in Sandwich. The picture I have of him in my mind's eye is always the same. He is standing on a little knoll, with his big square shoulders well back, at once re-

velling in the wind and defying it. His Open Championship in 1907 was won in windy weather on that very windy course, Hoylake, and when he tied for first place at Sandwich four years later, ultimately to lose to Vardon on playing off, there was a fine strong breeze blowing. Massy has twice finished top of the list in an Open Championship, and no one was surprised at his doing so; but he does not finish second or third. With him it seems to be a case of "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus.*" He goes out for victory or nothing, and if it is only a question whether he finishes a place or two higher up or lower down, with no chance of the first place at all, I do not think he cares very much about the matter. There is something of the amateur about him rather than of the professional who always compels himself to go on trying. No man in the world can try harder than Massy when he means to: to see him settle down to study a putt is a lesson in fierce concentration. On the other hand, when he does not greatly care the fact is equally obvious. There is no more individual player than Massy. The famous "pig's-tail" twiddle at the top of his swing, the inward turn of the left heel which outrages all orthodox teaching, the long and rather abrupt lift of the club in playing mashie shots, the delicate fingering of his putter—these things are conspicuously his own. He is a great and a fascinating golfer, and when I spoke of his deeds in our Open Championship I did not forget that he had won several times the Championship of his own France, and that against most of the quality if not all the quantity of British professionals.

Another fine player who has once won the Open Championship, and been near it once or twice besides, is Jack White. He is a golfer to be admired for several reasons, but particularly for a most lovable optimism, an undying keenness for the game. If he is off his game he is soon going to be on it again, and he has for ever got a new club or a new manner of swinging an old one, a cure or a dodge or a recipe which is going to make the rest of life a pure joy for himself or his pupils. Some of this imperishable enthusiasm must, I suspect, be a family trait, for it belongs to the ever-youthful Ben Sayers who is his uncle. If both these two live to be a hundred it is tolerably certain that on the memorable birthday, when he is being overwhelmed with congratulations and besieged by interviewers, each one of them will be working out some new theory of hitting a golf ball. Jack White has had in rather a marked degree his ups and downs in golf, but he has always pegged away cheerfully and hopefully and, if ever the other shots forsake him, he always humps his back, sinks his nose down over the ball, and taps his putts into the hole. A player of rather complex methods, he has never quite succeeded in evolving for himself the simple and direct style in the long shots, which is such a stand-by for some of his rivals, but as regards other people he has a remarkable talent for finding out what is right and what is wrong. There are several good amateur players who, when off their game, go to take a course of Jack White with the same confidence with which they would go for a course at Bath or Harrogate for the gout.

It is getting painfully clear to me that this account of famous players might be protracted to infinity. There are so many of them. To write down a list of fine professional players of to-day would need a page. Rowland Jones, a really beautiful golfer who has only lacked something of health and strength; Tom Williamson, the unfailingly steady, an ideal four-some partner; Lawrence Ayton, Edgar, and Mayo, now all gone to America, and Tom Vardon, too, whom Sandwich has never ceased to mourn; the young bloods, Havers and Allis—there is no end of them. Of an older generation I am not enough of a Scotsman to do justice to Andrew Kirkaldy, Ben Sayers, and Willie Park. There is one English professional, however, whom I cannot leave out and that is James Sherlock, who learned to be a very fine player on one of the worst courses in Europe, Hinksey, and was the valued friend and guide of generations of Oxford golfers. Sherlock is a golfer who looks as if he had reduced the game to its elements. Mr. Croome once acutely described him as having “no style, only method.” He takes hold of the club in the simplest possible way and then stands up and hits the ball. He hits it a good long way, and he declares that he hits it as hard as he can. Probably this is quite true, and it is part of his skill and wisdom that, recognising the limitations of his strength, he never tries to hit it too hard. There is no player whom it would be so impossible to tempt into trying for something that he felt to be beyond his powers: no one who so consistently cuts his coat according to his cloth. He is a thoroughly original thinker about golf, and I have

not forgotten the rating he gave me, no doubt well deserved, for writing what I believed to be a harmless, orthodox and conventional 'description of the running-up shot.

The rule that the course moulds the player has been well exemplified in Sherlock. Hinksey made him a splendid short-game player, but not, by professional standards, a great player of wooden clubs. When he left Oxford for Stoke Poges, his driving lengthened out remarkably. Though somewhere in the neighbourhood of thirty-five, he moved several distinct rungs up the ladder, and in 1910, when he won the *News of the World* Tournament, he was perhaps the most successful professional of the year. Now, having been an inland golfer all his life, he has, in his comparative old age, gone to a seaside course at Hunstanton. It will be curious to see if this still further rejuvenates him.

There still remains a large number of amateurs metaphorically clamouring for description. Some of them, more is the pity, we do not now see playing. There is Mr. Charles Hutchings, for instance, who began golf when he was about thirty, won the Championship when he was fifty-three and a grandfather into the bargain, and was never so much to be feared as when seen disconsolately practising and painfully rubbing a rheumatic elbow between his shots. There is Mr. John Low, too, who now resolutely looks on at golf, so that we can never again see in quite its perfection the grand manner of wielding the wooden putter. But Mr. Low has always been so thoroughly a golfing philosopher that, even when

his game was at its very best, I believe he got more interest and pleasure out of watching than playing. Mr. Low began his golfing career by a remarkable feat of personal magnetism. He made crowds of his friends play golf on Coldham Common at Cambridge, possibly the most repellent spot where the game ever was played. He has done many things for the game since, and amongst others written delightfully about it. Any one who has ever played for the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society owes a big debt of pleasure to him and to Mr. Arthur Croome. A broad-minded conservative, the best kind of traditional Scottish golfer, the best of all after-dinner golfing speech-makers, Mr. Low has made a great and characteristic mark on the golf and golfers of his time.

In any vision of amateur golfers no figure comes more readily to mind than that of Mr. Edward Blackwell, throwing his whole body and soul into the blow, his feet clawing and tearing at the ground, a fearsome and yet, by reason of the rounded perfection of his swing, a graceful spectacle. Mr. Blackwell does not now hit quite so far as he used to, but he still hits as hard and with the same joy of slogging, so that we can get our full money's worth of fun in looking on. As in the case of Mr. Mure Fergusson, the fact that Mr. Blackwell has never won the Championship seems to leave a gap in the list. When he was quite young he made the mistake of working in California when he should have been golfing at home: and when he did come back he wasted some years in being rather a poor putter with a cleek, until he made the discovery that he could putt with an



aluminium club. It was after he lost in the final to Mr. Travers that he took to aluminium, and he has been a good putter ever since. Mr. Blackwell seems to me the perfect type of the natural golfer. Gifted by nature with a beautiful swing, he has enjoyed the game and, unless I do him injustice, bothered his head very little about it. I remember once to have asked him whether, in the hypothetical case of his being off his drive, he would consider the question of practising. He answered, No, since if he was off to-day he would probably be all right to-morrow. It is the confession of a simple faith, entirely justified in his case and one which would very likely make many of us happier if not better golfers. Sometimes he hardly seems to realise his own powers. For those who know Woking, it is recorded that Mr. Blackwell, on being told by a caddie to take his brassy for his second to the sixth hole, carried not only the green, but the railings beyond the green, and the trees beyond the railings, and half-way up the railway embankment into the bargain. Perhaps it is a tendency to this occasional and surprising form of error that has prevented him from winning quite all he might have done, but he has won a great deal and diffused a vast deal of enjoyment in doing so.

There could hardly be two players more vividly contrasted than Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Lassen, who was Amateur Champion in 1908 and runner-up in 1911. There is nothing happy-go-lucky or slap-dash about Mr. Lassen: very little *joie de vivre* in his play: nor has he the style of a natural boy golfer. He has

a genius for taking pains, a chess-player's powers of concentration, and an exceptionally keen clear brain in which he has thought out the way of playing golf that suits him. When he was playing one of his matches at Sandwich in 1908—I fancy it was against Major Cecil Hutchison—it was a bright, sunshiny day. Mr. Lassen was putting with a club that had a bulging back and so a thick upper edge. He addressed himself to a putt and then found that the sun was glinting on the edge of his putter. He walked to an adjacent bunker, put some sand on the upper edge of his putter, came back and holed the putt. A golfer who can do that has very rare and valuable qualities, and it is only one example of Mr. Lassen's power of leaving nothing to chance when he feels himself in form. When he does not feel in form he relaxes his attention to some extent, but he is always a hard fighter, a foeman who neither gives nor asks for quarter.

Mr. Jenkins, the Amateur Champion of 1914, is another dour and pugnacious player, but he goes into battle not so sombrely as Mr. Lassen, but rather in the manner of Alan Breck, rejoicing in the fact that he is a "bonny fighter." As a human being he is always good fun to watch with his quick, abrupt, determined movements and his unruffled confidence. From a technical point of view I should always choose his iron play to look at, for it is as clean and crisp as the shutting of a knife and full of variety of stroke. Few people, moreover, are more likely to hole a putt when it is badly needed, and whether he holes it or not, however unpromising the situation, he will

always take trouble and always give himself and the ball a chance.

Mr. Michael Scott is not only a very good golfer but a very interesting one, because having been "teethed on a club," he practically remodelled his whole game after coming to years of golfing discretion. Before he went to Australia he slashed at the ball, as I have been told by those who then knew his game, with the most complete abandon and a swing as full and free as that of his brother, Osmund—than which, by the way, there is no more glorious example of a really full swing to be seen. He came back having won Open and Amateur Championships, and with an entirely new style, standing close to his ball with rather upright clubs and hitting the ball with a short and severely controlled swing. Of all present-day amateurs he is the one who seems most successfully to have solved the problem of doing the same thing over and over again in the same way, whatever the club. There is not much variety, maybe, but a great charm, nevertheless, in the tremendous "nip" he gets into all his shots apparently with the forearm, and it is seen at its best against a wind. With this controlled style he developed a control over his whole manner of playing the game; as he walks silently, almost stealthily, after his ball, he seems as if he were playing in a trance. He can go on playing one straight shot after another for a heart-breaking length of time, and it is this blamelessness that is the strongest part of his game. It has only one disadvantage, that if he does unaccountably make a bad shot, it is so surprising an event as sometimes to throw him out of

his stride. It was, I think, one mysteriously fluffed mashie shot in the semi-final at Muirfield last year that lost him his match against Mr. Gardner. It was so incredible, and yet it was, as Mr. Mantalini would say, "a dem'd horrid fact." Perhaps it lost him an Amateur Championship as well. He is certainly a good enough golfer to win one.

Major C. K. Hutchison at his best had this quality of blamelessness in a high degree. With an admirably sound style, that looked and looks now as if it could never go wrong, he could go on hitting straight for days together. His errors have always seemed to be made only when quite close to the hole. There are so many more fine golfers that I should like to write about; two more ex-champions in Major Gordon Barry and Mr. Robb; Mr. Robert Harris, a most seductive player; and Mr. Gordon Lockhart, Major Guy Campbell, Mr. Aylmer, Mr. Sidney Fry, and Mr. H. E. Taylor, and the whole formidable clan of Hambros and Martin Smiths. But as I have had a good deal to do one way and another with University golf, I should like to end with a few who have been pre-eminently University golfers.

An old friend of mine from Oxford accused me the other day of declining to make any positive statement about golf. Well, I will accept his challenge now and make one. I put Mr. Guy Ellis, who played for Oxford in 1895 and 1896, first among all the undergraduate golfers I ever saw. It is not an opinion that can be supported by facts and figures. Mr. Ellis only played once or twice in a Championship, without going very far. He won his two matches against

Cambridge by very small margins. But the wholesome dread of a golfer's opponents is always good evidence, and those who knew and feared Mr. Ellis's game at that time and for a few years afterwards, whether they positively agree with me or not, will agree that he was a wonderful golfer. I used to play with him at Eton, when he was good by fits and starts, but rather erratic. After an interval of two years, I met him again when he was playing for Oxford, and he was brilliantly steady and steadily brilliant. I never knew any one, amateur or professional, who hit the ball so persistently straight with all clubs, when he wanted to. The trouble was that he did not always want to, but I shall not forget one occasion when he did. Playing for Woking, he had been winning his matches against the Oxford and Cambridge teams by the barest possible margins. Somebody made some small joke about this, and it turned out a very poor joke indeed for the next Oxonian that Mr. Ellis played. The giant was goaded to action, and won by sixteen up in an eighteen-hole match. His was too eccentric a genius for everyday life and golf perhaps, but genius it was.

After he went down Oxford had two more very fine undergraduate golfers in Mr. Humphrey Ellis and the late Mr. Johnny Bramston. Both were just about as good as they could be, and there was much argument as to which was the better. Mr. Ellis is still playing a beautiful game, though he plays it chiefly in the seclusion of Rye. As to Mr. Bramston, if he had not soon, after his first year, developed his fatal illness, I can hardly imagine that anything could have

stopped him winning the Championship. In that first year he had a wonderful week at Westward Ho! in which he beat in succession in team matches, Mr. Hilton, Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. Low, and Mr. Ellis, some of them by an irreverently large number of holes, and not long after he just lost in the semi-final of the Championship to Mr. Robb. He had power and crispness and confidence all in abundant measure. How plainly I can see him now, with his red mop of hair blown about by the wind and that right wrist of his climbing over the left at the end of the shot, as if tugging at the ball to keep it on the straight path. There have been very few golfers of such promise. If not quite so brilliant as these three, Mr. Hooman was very good as an undergraduate, and so was Mr. J. L. Humphreys, who went away to foreign climes and so is little known.

Cambridge has not produced any golfers who were so good as these three at a similarly early age. We do not seem to deal in infant phenomenons. True, they had Mr. Gordon Barry, who was an amateur champion, but he came up with his honours upon him. He had won them as the undergraduate of another university, St. Andrews. Nor, in fact, did he ever do himself full justice as a Cambridge golfer—or later as an Oxford one. Leaving him on one side, as a special case, I think Mr. Herman de Zoete was as good a Cambridge undergraduate player as ever played, with great power and a lovely swing. He hardly ever plays now, more is the pity, except sometimes at North Berwick on a summer holiday, when he is, I believe, as good as ever. Mr. R. P. Humphries was

very good in 1914, and in that year reached the semi-final of the Amateur Championship. Other Cambridge players have matured more slowly and improved much after their undergraduate days. Mr. John Low is a conspicuous example: so is Mr. Mellin: so is the best golfer, in my judgment, that has yet come out of Cambridge, Mr. H. D. Gillies. Mr. Gillies has a versatile genius for games as well as more serious things. He came up to Cambridge with a notion of getting a cricket blue, never played cricket at all but rowed in the University boat. He came into the golf team by chance, being on a reading party at Sandwich, where the match chanced to be played that year, and so being discovered at the last moment. With this remarkable capacity for doing things well and tremendous determination, he made himself a few years after he came down into a wonderfully good golfer. He, like one or two others I have mentioned, has simplified golf. He seems to be playing one shot all the time, and that a most unpleasantly good one. It is to some extent a deceptive appearance. Taylor also appears to be playing one shot all the time, though a very different shot to that of Mr. Gillies, but he cannot really be doing so. When people play the game in this fashion it means that they have got a very correct basis to their game—perhaps it is our friend Mr. Croome's "fundamental shot" again. At any rate, they have the essential thing and cut down non-essentials to a minimum. And they are usually extremely steady. Mr. Gillies, at his best, is magnificently, detestably steady, and very powerful as well. Very few modern amateurs have clung so close to the

professionals as he did in the two French Open Championships just before the war. Surgery being more important than golf, he has not the time for golf nowadays, but he has great shots in him.

Among Oxford golfers he has something of a counterpart in Mr. R. H. de Montmorency, who improved enormously after he left Oxford. He was a much better player when at Oxford than most people supposed, as I used to find out to my cost when I played with him in the vacation. It was, however, only some years afterwards, when a convenient attack of whooping-cough gave him a long holiday at Rye, that he jumped right up into his proper place, which is a very high one. He has not only firmness, crispness, and power, but real accuracy, a quality which at the moment our amateurs lack. There are so many who can hit the ball beautifully and play half a dozen holes like demigods and then play one or two in a very ungodlike manner. Not so Mr. de Montmorency, when he is in good practice. He will go on and on and on, and if the one thing needed to win the hole and the match is that the ball should be on the course, his adversary need entertain no hopes of it being in the rough. No more passionate lover of ball games ever struck a golf ball. Even the best of men are not faultless, and Mr. de Montmorency is not so fond of foursomes as some of his friends want him to be. Otherwise he seems to me an almost perfect example of the happy golfing warrior.

Another Oxford golfer who has come comparatively late into his kingdom is Mr. Holderness, perhaps at this moment the best amateur golfer in England, a



lovely player of strokes, who lacks only the power of not allowing the game to take too much out of him.

To-day Oxford has come back to the glory of its ancient days when there were Ellises and Bramstons, for in Mr. Tolley and Mr. Wethered it has two golfers who are in the first flight when in their undergraduate days. They are not, with all respect to them, so steady and reliable as were those particular heroes of twenty years back, and they lose, I think, more matches; but as regards power and possibilities they are the most formidable undergraduates that have yet played, and Mr. Tolley's golf in the University match of 1920 has certainly never been equalled in the Oxford and Cambridge match. The first time I ever saw Mr. Tolley play golf I said that he was the only amateur I had seen for a long time who might some day win not only an amateur but an open Championship. I write my words down now, because, in case they come true, I should like to have the credit of being a prophet. A golfer with that great power and that beautifully easy swing of the club ought to do wonderful things. As one looks at him with envious eyes one is disposed to say, "If I could swing a club like that, I'm hanged if I'd ever go off the course." Mr. Tolley does go off the course, sometimes a very long way off it, and at the moment his game seems to be in an unconsolidated state. Now and again he over-swings himself and swings his head off the ball, but that should pass away like the measles of youth. We shall all be disappointed with Mr. Tolley if he does not do all sorts of good things in the next few years.

Mr. Wethered is younger than Mr. Tolley. He can hit the ball just about as far, and on occasions quite as crooked. His driving swing, if it has not quite the same ease, is free and dashing, and his iron play has the real snap about it. With a good, cheerful, fighting temperament, and a love of the game, he, too, is brimming over with promise, and should find a place for many years to come in any chapter on the great golfers of this country.

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## Chapter VII. *Golfing Doctrines Ancient and Modern*

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IN reading Duncan's chapters in this book I have been greatly struck, though not for the first time, with the change that has come over golfing doctrine since the time when there first began to be a considerable educational literature in golf. It is not merely that more latitude is in many respects allowed to-day. That would be natural enough, for with the enormously increased number of golfers there must be more players to constitute the exception to the rule, and those players good enough to command respect. It is rather that some of the rules, which were laid down as laws of the Medes and Persians, are now regarded not merely as rules that may be broken, if it best suits the learner's idiosyncrasy to do so, but as contrary to the practice of many of the best players.

Since *The Art of Golf* and the "Badminton" were written—and there have been many books since, but none, I think, so well worth reading—a far more closer study and analysis has been made of the methods of leading players. The art of the instantaneous photographer has helped to elucidate some mysteries, whereas the "posed" photograph not only did no good but a good deal of harm. To give an obvious example, any golfer who deliberately poses for a photograph at the top of his swing instinctively raises the

right elbow in order to keep the club in position. Hence he and other people might easily get the notion that this elbow should be far higher at the top of the swing than it in fact is in the playing of a real shot.

Some of the changes of teaching are due to the change to the rubber-cored ball, and in any case it does not at all follow that in every case the modern doctrine is right and the ancient one wrong. There is a fashion in golfing styles as in everything else, and if some super-golfer should arise who takes a short run at the ball on the tee, those unfortunate people who write about golf would no doubt find some good reason why we have all been utterly wrong in trying to hit more or less firm footed. In one or two cases doctrines which were preached in the eighties and later thought to be unsound, are now coming into their own again with the inevitable swing of the pendulum. In any case it is rather entertaining to examine a few conspicuous examples of the changes of doctrine that have taken place.

Take first of all the question of grip. Mr. Laidlay for years held his club in the method which is now called the "Vardon" grip or "overlapping" grip, but he was treated as an eccentric genius, and the laying of any thumb down the club was, save for the short game, forbidden. When Mr. Everard wrote his very interesting book *Golf in Theory and Practice* in 1896, he admitted that there must be some relaxation. "We see," he said, "the Vardons with the thumbs down the shaft; Taylor with his odd right-hand grip." But Mr. Everard had not quite grasped the true inwardness of the new method, for a little later on he says:

"One thing is certain, that, when the club strikes the ball, the shaft in all cases must have arrived in such position that it is resting in the fork at the base of the thumb; those who adopt the finger grip allow it to drop into that position during the upward swing." Here is a curious instance of wrong observation by a very learned golfer. Those who use the overlapping grip never do anything of the sort. Ask Taylor if he ever did so and he will repudiate the charge with alarming energy. It is the point of this grip that it is an unchanging one throughout the swing. The right hand may relax a little of its tightness at the top of the swing, but the club never "flops," to use the most expressive word, into the web of the thumb. It stays, where it began, in the fingers. But the older doctrine that the club should turn freely in the right hand was too strong for those brought up in another school.

Personally, I should never be much surprised if there set in a wave of fashion for the old-fashioned grip such as Abe Mitchell uses so effectively. Not for the select body of the best professionals, perhaps. They have proved, as far as it can be proved, that for them the overlapping grip conduces to the most accurate golf. It may lose them a little distance, but they can afford that and need the accuracy. It is an interesting little fact that Duncan when he wants to test a shaft goes back to his boyhood's grip, since he finds he can thus get more life and "feel" out of the shaft. He thinks he gave up a perceptible number of yards of length when he took to overlapping. This makes one wonder whether the general run of mankind have done themselves much good by blindly taking to this

grip. They have not got the strong wrists and fingers of the professional, and they cannot very often afford to forgo any fraction of strength and length. It is noticeable, too, that good lady players, who are presumably not very strong in the fingers, hold their clubs, as a rule, in the old-fashioned way. One of the most positive of my friends, and a very good golfer, stated roundly the other day that amateurs as a class had done more to spoil their games by following one another sheep-like in this overlapping habit than by anything else they had ever done. He is, as I said, a positive and arbitrary gentleman, but there is perhaps something in his views. As a confirmation of them it is worth pointing out that in cold weather, when it is difficult to get a firm grip of the club, Braid often ceases to overlap with his right hand; and Braid on a cold day can grip a club much more firmly than most of us can on a warm one. We used once to hear a great deal about "Left hand tight and right hand loose." To-day that respectable maxim is little quoted. Duncan, however, does quote it, and puts what I take to be the right interpretation on it, namely, that the right hand is not to do too much work in the taking up of the club. Its turn comes on the way down.

In the matter of stance in driving we seem to be getting back to what we were originally taught. Sir Walter Simpson and Mr. Hutchinson preached the stance with the right foot drawn back a little behind the left, and in that they followed Mr. Chambers and Mr. Forgan. Then there came Harry Vardon and Taylor standing "open." Mr. Ball had stood open and perhaps Hoylake had copied him, but generally

he had been regarded as a brilliant exception. Now people began to think that what Vardon and Taylor did must be right for every one else, and stood open accordingly. But to-day the fashion is setting the other way. We see Duncan standing very distinctly "square": Taylor's stance is not so open as it used to be, and right feet in general are being pegged back. The great mass of American players, too, stand decidedly square. The average golfer has discovered that the early and orthodox teaching was soundest for them. He may feel very comfortable with an open stance and have the sensation of knowing where he is going, but he is apt to pick up the club too straight and cannot so easily get the big true full sweep that is best for him.

Golfers have always talked of the open stance, but the open as opposed to the shut face of the club is a new technicality in golfing language, and may at first possibly have puzzled some of Duncan's readers. It signifies, too, a new and revolutionary doctrine. All the books have always laid it down as absolutely fundamental that at the top of the swing the nose of the club should be pointing straight down to the ground. But lately even that has been questioned, and we find Duncan talking, almost as a matter of course, of shutting the face of the club in certain circumstances, as for example in holding the ball up into a left-hand wind. Now, when the face of the club is shut the nose at the top of the swing does not point to the ground: the whole club face has a distinct turn heavenward. So here is something which really does appear subversive and Bolshevistic. More-

over, if the nose has not got to point exactly at the ground, the left wrist need not be so severely tucked under the shaft—another upsetting of ancient beliefs. I remember very well the astonishment that was caused by one photograph in Mr. Hutchinson's *Book on Golf and Golfers* published in 1899. There was a picture of Mr. Guy Ellis, whom Mr. Hutchinson described in a splendid compliment as "the straightest driver that the writer ever saw," and there, contrary to all the laws of God or man, was the nose of his club pointing straight up to the sky. However, Mr. Ellis was regarded in all respects as a law to himself, and the question was thus dismissed. Later Mr. Beldam's photographs showed Mr. Maxwell doing something of the same thing, but, as people very truly said, nobody else in the world swung a club in the least like Mr. Maxwell, and again there was no controversy. To-day professionals who are regarded as mortals of orthodoxy talk unblushingly of shutting the club face, and we can see that they do it on occasions and to some slight degree. Duncan tells us which of them do it and which do not. But the solid, revolutionary fact is there. It is a much more marked characteristic of modern golf as regards iron play than wooden play. Speaking with due humility, I think that many people would find some degree of shutting the face very valuable with their irons. With the wooden clubs there seems to me more danger, because the left wrist of many golfers is already disinclined to get at all under the shaft at the top of the swing and needs no further licence in this regard. Of course, there is always a danger of exaggerating any



new thing in golf, and in regard to this shutting of the face the ordinary mortal is venturing on to particularly perilous ground.

By far the most desperate revolutionary of all has been Abe Mitchell when he threw grave doubt on the value of the follow-through; but most golfers, while they admit that to watch Mitchell driving is the best fun in the world, have not deluded themselves into imitating him. The follow-through has never been held up as a means in itself of hitting the ball, but as an outward and visible sign that the hitting of the ball has been properly done. For the golfer in the street it so remains and, however paradoxical it may seem, many golfers, by concentrating their minds on what is to happen after the ball is struck, have made themselves strike it properly. The mental picture of a follow-through has helped many a sufferer to disentangle knots in his back swing. To-day we hear far more of punching and hitting the ball and less of sweeping it than we used to, but truth is sometimes a dangerous thing. With weak mortals pretences are often safer.

Another new doctrine is that of "hands leading," but it is practised rather than preached. The great golfers who practise it believe that it is too dangerous for golfing babes and sucklings and that these had better know nothing about it. We have always been taught that the head of the club should start the swing and the hands should follow after it in due time; but Harry Vardon begins his swing by taking back hands and head simultaneously, or even perhaps with the hands showing the way. Duncan, who remodelled

his swing on Vardon's does the same thing, more particularly perhaps in some of his moods than in others, and there are other fine golfers who do it, too. These have what is called an upright swing, and they have great advantages; their club travels longer upon the line on which the ball is to travel than is the case with the more old-fashioned flat swingers: they also have an enviable facility for picking up the ball through the green. I fancy, however, that their belief is that this method, while excellent for a really first-class player, is perilous for the common run. The ordinary golfer has the greatest difficulty in slinging the head of his club round and acquiring the proper turning movement of his body. If he were told to let his hands take the lead, he would not turn at all. And so, unless I am mistaken, "hands leading" remains largely a doctrine for champions. The rest of us do better to stand in the old ways.

Finally, as regards driving, there is one doctrine that has always been preached to some extent but is now far more generally practised than it used to be. We have always been taught not to swing too far, but those who taught us sowed some doubts in our minds by swinging the club a long way themselves. It is instructive to look at some of the early photographs of Harry Vardon. The club has gone a surprisingly long way past the horizontal, and the same may be noticed, though not to the same extent, in the other great men. In the case of some of them, increasing age may have had a little to do with the change. No doubt, too, the rubber-cored ball makes a difference, but neither of these reasons account alto-

gether for it. To-day it may be said to be the orthodox doctrine that every inch the club goes past the horizontal at the top of the swing represents so much energy wasted, since the club has to be hauled back into the horizontal position before the real business of hitting begins. Of course, every one does not obey this rule. Mitchell, for instance, goes a good deal past the horizontal, and generally, I take it, those who are inclined to do so employ the "old-fashioned" grip which allows for a little more play of the club in the right hand. Broadly speaking, however, orthodoxy and rigid control of swing go together, and it is a good thing for driving in general that it is so.

In regard to iron play there has been a change in nomenclature. "Three-quarter shots," "half shots," even our old and trusted friend "wrist shot," seem to be disappearing from the language and everything is some sort of "push shot." There never was a less expressive phrase invented. The shot is admirable but its name is futile. There has, however, been more than a change of name. We were taught that the iron club should come not only downward on the ball but across it. The ball was to be pitched in this manner to the left of the hole and would break a little to the right. The talk was then of "cut"; now we speak of "back spin." The modern professional comes down on the ball with his iron club but he does not cut across the line of flight. His club goes straight on. The ball when it pitches bites the ground, more especially at the second bound; but it, too, goes straight on and does not break to the right.

Another change which is due largely to the nature

of the modern ball is the multiplicity of iron clubs used for approaching. Our teachers used to make us, as far as they could, use few clubs and learn to use them in a variety of ways. To get a dead fall by the use of a much lofted club was held up to us as rather a confession of weakness. The lofted club was a difficult and dangerous weapon, since the least fraction of mis-hitting, higher or lower on the face, might make so much difference. To-day everybody does a great deal of his pitching with a niblick or a mashie-niblick with a much lofted face. It is so difficult to make the heavy little ball stop on the green, that there is no other way out of it. The best pitcher in the world, J. H. Taylor, now carries a mashie-niblick and uses it for the shorter pitching shots. I do not think he likes doing it, but he does it. When such a master finds it necessary, there cannot be much doubt what other people have got to do. Once approaching was done with the "ordinary iron." That was supplemented by the mashie, and now we have one and sometimes a whole hybrid collection of mashie-niblicks. It seems rather a pity from an artistic point of view, but it cannot be helped. We must blame the ingenious Mr. Haskell and his successors.

There has been a very great deal of good advice given about putting in the last thirty years or so, some of it new, some of it true, some of it possibly both; but it would be difficult to say that the general doctrines preached as to the art are conspicuously different from what they were. The only statement that could be called even mildly revolutionary was that in Willie Park's excellent little book, recently

published, to the effect that he found it easiest to hook a putt into the hole. But he does not insist upon his readers making life more complicated for themselves by trying to do likewise.

There is perhaps a more general opinion, or at any rate a more openly avowed one, that the main part of the work of hitting should be done with the right hand. Willie Park is very strong on this point: so is Jack White, and so was Mr. Walter Travis. In earlier works we were rather told to putt with our wrists and find out for ourselves the proportions in which the work should be divided between the two hands. Mr. Everard, indeed, held that at short range flexion of the wrist should cease, and I think that Mr. Hilton, who putted very well by the light of nature most of his life and came to the study of it in—let us say—middle age, is now a believer in the stiff left wrist. Of putting, however, more obviously than of any other part of the game, it is true that it can be done effectively in a good many different ways, and we are always likely to have divergent gospels on the subject.

Whatever other changes there have been we have still a few commandments of our golfing youth still unassailed. No one has yet ventured to say anything against "Slow back" and "Keep your eye on the ball." Obedience to the first is a matter of degree. Duncan is now an enthusiastic believer in it, but his method of obeying it is not, if he will allow me to say so, one for general imitation. "Keep your eye on the ball" is, on the other hand, as Sir Walter Simpson would say, a "categorical imperative." It is difficult

to obey, but that is our fault and not the fault of the commandment. If there is a golfer who looks too hard at the ball, he has so far successfully concealed his crime.

WHEN the late Mr. F. G. Tait was presented to the Czar at Balmoral, the two talked about golf, and the then amateur champion told how he had "taken it seriously when he was eight years old." To-day there are thousands of boys and girls beginning the game at eight years old, thus enjoying advantages that were denied to their parents, and the question arises how seriously they are to take it. No one wants them to be priggishly solemn over the game, but they may as well learn to play as skilfully as they can, and there is some duty owing to them in the matter.

Children may very easily be driven too hard. I heard the other day of a too zealous father who took his whole flock to a famous course for the summer with a view to their golfing education, and they grew with one accord so tired of the game that they flew perversely to lawn-tennis. If left reasonably to themselves children do not lack enthusiasm. I can look back to my own golfing beginnings at about the age of eight at Felixstowe. I see a small creature in a flannel shirt, brown holland shorts and bare legs, burned to an excruciating redness by the sun, dodging in and out between the grown-up couples, a little outlaw to be ruthlessly passed and driven into. I can still hear the crack of the great Willie Fernie's ball against the black board of a bunker in which I was

delving, when I must have come very near to death. There was one short hole, the second or Gate hole, close to the Martello tower, which I used to play over and over again, dashing back to the tee to start again whenever there was a gap between the grown-up players. There are to-day hundreds of little boys just as keen and just as blissfully un-selfconscious about getting in the way. They will flog their way round the whole eighteen holes by themselves, taking over three hours in the process, yielding when they must to those who would pass them, and driving cheerfully into them as soon as they have got twenty yards ahead.

Granted the keenness, the question is how to direct it into the wisest channels. First come the clubs. It is easiest and cheapest to give a child a cast-off club of our own cut down, but it is not always best. A man's club, however shortened, and especially an iron club, is nearly always too heavy for a child to wield. The child cannot swing the club, but has to heave it up like a rifle in so many motions and gets into a disjointed and laborious style. It is wiser to get the clubs made by a professional. There need not be many of them. As far as the child's fun is concerned, three are ample: a wooden club with an encouraging measure of loft upon the face, a medium iron, and a mashie. For its future well-being, however, a fourth should certainly be added, namely, a putter. It is, I think, generally recognised that the average professional is, judged by his standard of skill in all other strokes, not a very good putter. I have always thought that this was due to the fact that in his caddie days he had very few clubs, and almost certainly no putter. He,



therefore, did his putting with an iron or cleek and acquired a method not suited to the orthodox putter. With a flat-lying and lofted club a boy may learn to pitch or cut or "jab" the ball into the hole, but not to roll it smoothly and truly. I know that in my own case I used as a boy to putt with a lofting iron and thus got into a habit of crouching low, gripping the shaft in the neighbourhood of the head and dragging the ball towards the hole. It has beset me at intervals ever since, to the great detriment of my putting, and only when the greens are quite appallingly bad have I found any compensating advantages in the accomplishment. Duncan confirms this theory, as I was interested to find from a paper he wrote on putting some years back. When the professional gets his putter, says Duncan, "he has to start learning to putt all over again. . . . He seldom succeeds in mastering the more upright club, and some fifty per cent. of the professionals persist in using a putting cleek which is far too flat." Let the child, therefore, have a proper putter. Here a cast-off will do very well, and there must be few fathers who have not in a cupboard at least one derelict putter which they once hopefully deemed a magic wand.

To the late beginner, all stiff and ungainly as he is, it is exasperating to observe how quickly and easily a child can learn to swing a club. Put a model before his eyes (I will assume a boy for the purposes of the argument), and he will produce a passable imitation in less than no time. If the model is a player with a sound style, there can be no education so good. With very little pressing the boy will follow the greatest

local player round the course, watching his every movement with pathetic dog-like eyes of admiration. If his hero is a really fine player the boy is in luck: he should be encouraged to watch all he can. But some discrimination is necessary, for there are local heroes who are not very good golfers and have thoroughly vicious styles. The parent must be careful lest he himself be imitated by his too dutiful offspring. There are many model fathers who are not model golfers. I have seen small boys plunging down the golfing road to ruin by copying their fathers' almost prohibitive methods, and have wondered whether it would be an act of disloyalty, an offence against the trade-union spirit amongst parents, to warn them. This monkeyish facility of the boy has its perils as well as its merits. He may so easily acquire a style that is fair enough to outward view, with a slap-dash swashbuckling air to it, and yet be radically unsound. Once he has got it he may never quite free himself of it again, and so all his life be subject to sudden breakdowns and the ensuing agonies of style-hunting.

I may illustrate this point by personal and painful reminiscences. When I was about ten, and so a golfer of some two years' standing, I was one day off my infantile game and the professional was asked to look at my swing. He looked and said that there was nothing much the matter except that at the top of the swing I bent my knees rather too much. No doubt he was right, and the horrid proof of it is this, that though at this present day I am subject to many superficially different diseases at golf, yet the cause of them all is the same, a tendency to too loose and florid a move-

ment of the knees, which sends my whole body sprawling. I rid myself of it for a while, but it is always lying in wait for me. In a certain camp in Macedonia we had some men of an Egyptian Labour Corps, and attached to them an interpreter. He had one stock phrase to describe general debility. "This man," he said, "bends at the knees." Well, that is my stock disease—I bend at the knees; and though I was warned against it at ten, I shall suffer from it at eighty. I suppose I was not caught early or warned impressively enough.

The moral is that we must look out for bad habits even in the youngest golfers. When we find them we must be very sparing in our good advice, for a boy has a facility for exaggeration. One whom I know well was waving his mashie round his head like a driver. I insinuated that this was too long a swing, and the next moment he was taking the club no further back than a putter and giving the ball nothing but a little poke or prod. If you tell him to be less like an eel, he stiffens up into a statue: if you as much as whisper "follow-through," he spins twice round after his stroke like a hammer-thrower. Therefore though we may have to say the same thing many times, we must not say it at too frequent intervals, and must rather understate our case. What we have to say will generally be in the nature of a restriction. A grown-up beginner may be urged to greater freedom. Not so, as a rule, a boy. He is lissom and fearless enough; his errors will nearly always tend towards a swing too long and florid: a body movement that is too free. And however loose and slashing his style we dare only check

it ever so slightly, because really to cramp him would be fatal. The best of young golfers have some wild oats that they must sow. I remember once, on a tour of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society in Lancashire, that an undergraduate member of our side played against Mr. John Ball. He played a very good, sound, steady game, going very straight and taking plenty of pains, making no outrageous errors and no great shots. Mr. Ball's verdict (he does not often give one, but it is worth hearing when he does) was that he "did not like to see a youngster too careful." And so, let us beware lest the boy's game becomes lifeless: let him take his wooden club and go gallantly for the impossible carry: he has plenty of time in which to learn to play short.

Besides this pusillanimous wisdom, which children to begin with will do better without, grown-up golfers have also many tiresome habits which children will do better without both now and for all eternity. Of such are the habits of waggling or of growing fussy over the slightest sound or movement in the neighbourhood. The natural child has only the most rudimentary waggle, if any, and he swings the club with only too little thought of any one being near him, so as to be in fact rather dangerous. Soon, however, he adopts the grown-up weaknesses, has many and ornate waggles, looks angrily out of the tail of his eye at some object moving in the distance, and peremptorily orders his own mother not to talk on the stroke. In this case, if we cannot set a good example we can at least try to counteract the effect of a bad one, and there is a good deal to be done by not too unkind laughter. The pro-

professional's play makes an excellent object lesson. It is hard work taking a child to see a professional match: it is necessary to run like a lamp-lighter in order that the small, eager person may be squeezed into the front rank, but it is worth doing. The rapidity of the play makes a deep impression, and the child is an imitative animal. The game of pretending is one to be played conscientiously, and no one can enact the part of a champion with any degree of artistic satisfaction if he fidget and waggle overmuch.

I always think that the watching and copying of a good model is more vital to education in iron play than in any other part of the game. A good driving style seems to come more easily and naturally to a boy "agile as a young opossum." Driving with its dash and go is, besides, the most superficially fascinating part of the game, and he will be more inclined to take pains to acquire it. Iron play is not so attractive to the young. It does not give so much scope for the boast that clamours for recognition—"Look how far I hit that one! Look, oh *do* look!" There is or should be a certain restraint about it. Restraint is unnatural in the young player, and the stroke which is perhaps the crown of the golfer's skill, the half-iron shot, is not quite a natural one and demands more control of the club than any other. It is in the iron shots that the professional and the "professionally moulded" amateur, as he has been called, is most unmistakably recognisable. Let others strive as they will, they cannot acquire that formidable, downward thrust of the club that sends the ball and the divot flying. So let our hypothetical boy be encouraged, above everything

else, to watch good iron play and to observe wherein its merits lie. He must not, it is true, try to run before he can walk. The first thing to do is to learn to hit a straight forward shot simply and truly. But, I think, granted the good model, the sequence of his shots may largely be left to nature. The more masterful, punching iron shots will come naturally with the growing strength of hand and wrist.

As to the form which a boy's games should take, if a boy is keen enough to enjoy it—and he generally is—I doubt if there is anything better for him than playing by himself. He must play some matches, of course, and that if possible with a rival of his own age. This will not only break him into match-playing: it will, as the saying is, "keep him in his proper place." There is nobody whose company is in the long run so salutary for us as a contemporary, for he stands no nonsense from us. Elders grant us little indulgences if only in the matter of losing our tempers and throwing our clubs about, which we come to expect as a right. An occasional match then, but otherwise the solitary round is excellent, for the boy will not grow slack over it as the grown-up would do. If he misses a particular shot he will try it over and over again till he gets it right. When he comes home, the account that he gives of his score will probably be inaccurate. The most honest little boys are often bad counters, but at worst this is a very lovable weakness and will disappear too soon.

If there be a grown-up good-natured enough to sacrifice himself, it is a good plan for him and the boy to play a solitary ball between them as if in a foursome.

In the summer evenings at Felixstowe my father and I used to play one ball thus for a whole round of nine holes. I don't think we had any imaginary foe—it was before the days of Bogey—but we counted our score. I can still recall the thrill when we did the nine holes in 56, though it does not sound a very good score to-day. Those rounds made the culminating joy of the day, and I hope it is not even now too late to express my gratitude for them.

This form of game will of course be excellent practice for a real foursome. A family foursome is very good fun, granted an empty course, so that there is not that paralysing sensation of people waiting behind us. So is an inter-family foursome, though in this case the feeling may run almost too high. One word of advice may be given to the elders in a family foursome, and that is that they observe, to a reasonable degree at any rate, the rigour of the game. I would not have them too relentless. For instance, I have known a foursome, in which some of the players are very young, played under the rule that "air shots do not count." Perhaps this is immoral, but it is disheartening to the son to walk after a long tee shot of the father's, miss the globe himself, and then stand aside for another vast paternal drive. It must seem to him that he is not getting his money's worth. In the case of a complete miss, then, some relaxation may be allowable so long as there is a definitely understood rule on the point, and not merely an occasional concession from motives of pity. On the other hand, into whatever bunker or other horribly bad place the ball finds its way, there it should be played. It seems cruel to insist on a small

creature of ten struggling with a patch of rushes that would test Braid and his heaviest niblick. There is a natural temptation to bid the young player lift into some lie rather less hopeless, both because we are sorry for him and because we want to get on a little faster. But not only is this unwise, but to the credit of the young be it said, it is unpopular. They like to play the strict game, and twelve strokes or so per hole do not strike them in the light of a tragedy nor even as a weariness of the flesh. Twelve is only two over an average of tens, and on a long course tens take some getting.

I have written hitherto about real children, the eight and nine and ten year olds, because so many children have to-day the chance of beginning very young, and the younger the better. But I think most of what I have said is applicable also to older children, to the fourteens and fifteens. Certainly a boy of fourteen, generally a most hero-worshipping age at a public school, should be encouraged to observe good players as much as he can, and if he is a strong, well-grown boy he should soon be a good player himself. We have lately seen young Bocatzou, the French boy of fourteen, playing with Abe Mitchell on his own course, and that in a competition, and finishing in one round within three strokes of the great man. Young Tommy Morris was Open Champion at seventeen; America is full of infant prodigies of fifteen and sixteen. There are heaps of Bobby Joneses in embryo. There is no reason why a boy of sixteen with good opportunities should not be a very good golfer. When I hear a boy of that age remarked on by his adoring relations as



wonderful because he has a handicap of eight or nine, I feel inclined to be thoroughly crabbed and unpleasant and say he ought to have a much lower one. Of course he will still have a great deal to learn, but he ought to be able to hit the ball in a way that may be ignorant but is the despair of many of his elders. He will not know enough to know what is the matter with him when he is "off," and generally he will have a good deal of hard thinking about the game before him if he is to make the best of himself as a golfer. Some young players play very well by instinct till they come to the almost inevitable thinking stage: then they lose confidence and never quite get over it. Others will not be bothered to think and remain instinctive players all their lives, good, but not so good as they might have been, with some weak joints in their harness. Perhaps they are the happier ones and the wiser. There is certainly such a thing as thinking too much about golf for our general well-being. But it is certain that nobody, young or old, will make the best of himself as a golfer if he does not think hard about the game and think intelligently. Whether it is worth the golfer's while to do so is a matter of taste and temperament which only he can decide.

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## *Chapter IX. Courses and Characteristics*

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EVERY golf course that we know at all well has for us its characteristic atmosphere. It is an elusive thing, very hard to describe in words. It differs with each one of us, not only according to our temperaments and ways of regarding golf, but also according as we come to the course with a feeling of ownership or as guests and comparative strangers. Each course has its individual charm, or sometimes, especially if we play badly there, its individual terror. According to the course for which we are bound on a holiday, we know that we shall meet a particular kind of people and play a particular kind of match and of stroke, and so we have a particular kind of feeling when we are packing up our clubs to go there.

Take for example two famous courses, Sandwich and St. Andrews. There could scarcely be a greater contrast than between these two. The dominant note of Sandwich is one of privacy and peacefulness. It always seems to me the most delightful of all sleepy hollows. We go there by a sleepy train and spend some time drowsing in the sunshine on Minster platform—a sensation redolent of Sandwich. When we do get there we drive up to the club-house in an old four-wheeler pulled by a comatose horse. The clump of trees by the club-house is just such a one as is dotted here and there over all that big bare stretch of East

Kent, telling of some quiet old farmhouse. And the Sandwich club is a farmhouse that has been changed and glorified. In the club-house we meet the same nice friendly people who are always there playing the same matches. When luncheon is over we potter gently out on to the first tee, and in five minutes we have lost all the other players. They are hidden from us by the great sandhills and we wander through veritable sleepy hollows in an enchanted solitude. Personally I come to Sandwich as a guest, for I do not belong to the club, but I know of no course that gives me a more homelike feeling.

No doubt there are many who come back to St. Andrews with this same feeling. The crowd and the bustle and the hundreds of strange faces strike them as agreeably familiar things. To me, and I fancy to a good many others, it is all quite different. It is exciting and enjoyable to get to St. Andrews: there are plenty of friends always to be met there and the best of good matches to be played, but it is rather frightening nevertheless. One poor golfer feels such an inconsiderable speck in all that hurly-burly. If there was privacy at Sandwich, here is publicity with a vengeance. It is not, of course, that any one looks at us, but we never play a shot without feeling that we are surrounded with golfers. It is a wonderful thing to see the whole population of a town pouring out to play: it is a splendid thing that they should be able to do so, but it is also a tiresome thing to have to ballot for a starting time, to be lucky if we get one, to wait and wait on the tees. About golf at St. Andrews there is something of the struggle for life, and it seems

to me to have a hardness symbolic of that struggle. It is hard for one reason because it is very good: there is no doubt about that. Then the very ground is hard: so are the caddies in their criticisms. The bunkers are hard on us: we don't know exactly where they are, and so our best shots go into them. Nobody will sympathise with us on that account. We are told that we shall not say such foolish things when we know the links better. Mr. Leslie Balfour-Melville will tell us that it has taken him—shall we say—fifty years to learn the course and that he is learning still. It is good schooling, but we are apt to be rather cowed: to feel that we are not made of quite stern enough stuff, and yearn for something a little more southern and less severely bracing.

These two impressions are purely personal ones. I give them only to try to illustrate what I mean by the characteristic atmospheres of courses. Taking a broader and more general view, the atmosphere must differ primarily according to the type to which a course belongs. Once courses were divided simply into seaside and inland, and the worst seaside golf was held to be in a different class from the best inland. To-day the best seaside golf is still the best of all and, if only because of the wind that blows there and finds out our weaknesses, seaside golf is a thing apart. But we must have many more subdivisions. Some golf courses by the sea, for instance, do not provide the genuine article which is seaside golf. Of such are the courses on the downs perched high on chalk cliffs. Here is really played inland golf, and that of a very peculiar and characteristic kind. The charming course of Le

Touquet near Etaples has a golf of its own. There is the sea and sand and tall sandhills, but on the sandhills fir-trees cluster thickly as they might at Sunningdale. The strongest impression that we carry away with us is of the heavenly smell of the firs on a hot sunny day as we drive from a tee made in a clearing in the wood.

Then a little different, again, are the rocky courses by the sea. There are little outcroppings of rock at North Berwick. If we run over Point Garry we shall find rocks in plenty. Classic deeds have been done among them. Willie Park played a left-handed shot from the rocks on to the green in his match with Vardon, and then holed a down-hill putt and won the hole. Major Cecil Hutchison and Mr. Laidlay once tied for a North Berwick medal. They played off and tied again. At the third attempt Mr. Laidlay went over the first hole into the rocks, and played so many shots there that he then and there retired from the fray. Mr. Balfour, too, once began—and ended—a medal round there. “The premier made an unfortunate start,” so wrote the euphemistic reporter in telling of the catastrophe. We cannot disregard such historic rocks: they must to some extent colour our impressions. Portsalon on Lough Swilly is an engaging little course where there are rocks here and there, and in particular one fine crag called the Matterhorn over which we must try to drive. At Turnberry in Ayrshire there are holes where our ball bounds playfully off glistening white rocks into deep blue water. On all these courses there is sand in plenty, but the rocks give an exotic touch which differentiates them.

Of perfectly orthodox seaside courses I gave two examples in Sandwich and St. Andrews. They represent two very different types, the course of big hills and valleys and the superficially open course of less pronounced but as a rule more subtle difficulties. Occasionally one course may be said to belong to both types. At Prestwick the older holes nearer the clubhouse offer us tall hills and little secret dells, and perhaps the biggest and most alarming cross-bunker in the world, the Cardinal. As soon as we have crossed the highest of the hills, the Himalaya range at the fifth hole, and until we cross it again at the eleventh, we are in a different kind of country altogether, flatter and having no imposing features, though a sufficiency of difficulties. As a rule, however, and speaking very generally, a course tends definitely towards one type or the other.

These two types often make different impressions according to the golfer's standard of play. To the rather rudimentary player who is never free from fear of the common top, the courses of big hills are at once most exciting and most terrible. The penalties that await him in the face of the hill are so dreadful that every time he gets safely over he thrills anew. "Fear is the strong passion," he says with Mr. Malthus in "The Suicide Club." "It is with fear that you must trifle if you would taste the intensest joys of living." To the good player, who may top now and again but does not seriously consider the risk, the hills are sometimes neither alarming nor interesting. They hide the object at which he aims and so deprive him of an exquisite and artistic pleasure, that of seeing exactly

where he has to pitch the ball and of seeing his ball pitch there. So at least he says, and no doubt it is largely true. But I think that the superior person makes too little both of the fear and the pleasure produced in his breast by the big hill. In a scoring round, at any rate, the hill gets something of its own back, for the best of players *may* top, and the thought of this possibility comes into their heads by some odd chance just when they are waiting on a tee in front of a frowning mountain. There are some such shots as to which no one ever has the hardihood to deny that he is glad when they are safely over. Such, before the hole was altered, was the tee shot to the Maiden at Sandwich, against a wind and from the St. George's tee. There was just cause for a sigh of relief when the ball flew over that black-boarded precipice. It was a heart-warming sight, and indeed a ball high in the air over a mountain top against a blue sky is a beautiful thing to see, and I do not think that we grow quite so blasé and tired of it as we often pretend.

For these courses of hills and valleys, "jolly" seems to me the right word. Sandwich, Formby, Burnham in Somerset, Newcastle in County Down—here are names that at once occur, and these courses produce a jovial spirit, the spirit of playing golf for fun, which makes us go for tremendous carries, go out for a third round in the evening when we are too old and shall be tired next day: makes us even consent to play a four-ball match, though in saner moments we know we don't like it and can't do it.

Now the flatter and more open courses where the difficulties are less obvious I always imagine as being

rather more severe and business-like. Hoylake, for instance, has something of St. Andrews about it. There is apparently not much in the way: it looks almost uninteresting, but we have to keep so straight and play so many of our shots just right if we are to get the right figure at the hole. The ground is hard, too, though it has grown softer of late, and seems to kick our ball unkindly away from the green unless it is very truly struck. The undulations are not kindly, charitable ones, as they are in the courses of dells and hollows. Everybody would not agree, I know. Some very good players find Hoylake dull: many very bad ones say that it is both dull and easy. And to the bad ones it may be comparatively easy. There is not much trouble straight in front of their noses: they can trundle the ball along and get a good many fives. Indeed we can all do that to some extent: it is the fours that want getting. And then again Hoylake seems particularly business-like to me because I have always gone there not for a free and easy game, but for a match, very often a match against a terrible opponent. Certainly there has been no lack of jollity about the dinners after the matches, and I love to get back to Hoylake even though I am a little frightened of it.

Rye has a good deal of the atmosphere of Sandwich and yet it is not the same. There is the same charming, peaceful old town with grass growing amongst the cobbles in the streets: the same sleepy friendliness, and the same lack of bustle and time-sheets and starters: there are also tall sandhills. But while at Sandwich the hills seem to be everywhere and we wind in and out amongst them, at Rye there is a single chain



of them and we do not play over it but skirt it, seeing it for the most part as a menace on our flank. Our actual strokes are played in barer, more open and, as it seems to me, more cruel country.

I have given some instances of seaside courses. Now let us take the inland courses and their different species. There is what we may call the field course with hedges and ditches and a tree or two and usually a clay soil: it is not so frequently found as it used to be since golfers have grown more particular. There is the park course and the down course: the course of sand and heather to be found in wonderful profusion and excellence round London: the course of sand without heather which is rather different: the course on a common, inclined to be moribund though often very pleasant, with its clumps of gorse, and absence of artificial bunkers. Finally, we might almost say that there were Colt courses and Fowler courses, for the hands of these two illustrious architects are stretched out over the whole countryside, and their handiwork is easily recognisable.

The course on a chalk down has an atmosphere entirely of its own. If we are light-hearted, it may be very amusing: if we are too serious and are trying to defeat a player with local knowledge, it will make us tear our hair. The former is the right mental attitude, for the turf is a joy to walk on, though often not to putt on; the ball precipitates itself for joyous distances down mountain sides, it soars gloriously over chasms and ravines, and nowhere does the wind blow more divinely fresh. There are causes for irritation if we allow them to be so. There is, for instance, the

green like a gun-platform cut out of the side of a hill. Play almost any kind of shot to one side of the green and the ball will come bounding and kicking down on to the green. Play just an inch too low on the other side and the best shot is like the worst. Yet if there is no gun-platform the circumstances may be yet more frightful: we have a green sloping with an equable steepness which makes any shot from above the hole practically impossible.

Some people may know the course at Royston near Cambridge, where there is a great view over the surrounding plain and a stretch of undulating down broken by steep-sided ravines that are perfect natural amphitheatres. There is one hole, the fifth, where a good tee shot—or a bad second—lands the ball at the bottom of one of these ravines. The green is perched on the top of the opposing cliff and calls for a high pitching shot. Now since every one gets to the bottom of the ravine and every one does not replace his divot, the chances of getting a bad lie are considerable. Even with a good lie the shot is alarming, and so we may see people patiently batting the ball up the side of the hill only to see it come rolling back to their feet. Sometimes it hovers for a minute at the very top: the player starts up after it and then back it comes: slowly to begin with and then gathering speed, till it is further off than ever it was.

Again, who that has played at Eastbourne has not watched with amazement turning gradually into despair the local champion aiming in an almost exactly opposite direction to that of the hole and steering the ball over hill and dale till it lies stone dead at last?

But if the putting is despairing on these down courses the driving is soothing to a broken spirit, for as a rule we have the whole British Empire to drive into with never a hazard as far as the eye can reach, save perhaps two small hurdles called a zareba and intertwined with gorse that refuses to grow. Royston used to be the finest driving cure in the world, for the air was like champagne after sluggish, torpid Cambridge, and having perfect liberty to drive crooked, one generally drove straight as an arrow.

Golf on a common has an old-fashioned flavour which is rare and pleasant. It is golf as it used to be played when the great boom was only beginning, when to meet another man with golf-clubs on a railway journey was to hail him as a comrade: when there was considered to be an inexhaustible fund of humour merely in the word niblick, and the passer-by jeered at the golfer as he pursued his ball. There is still as a rule a comparative simplicity about it all which is reminiscent of the old days of the pioneer golfers. The club-house is not too gorgeous, and we expect to wait on ourselves at lunch, to eat bread and cheese and drink beer. There should be plenty of gorse, if the course is to be really typical, a pond, a stray browsing donkey or two, perhaps a family of gypsies encamped and little gypsy children whining and fawning on us for pennies: perhaps also a sturdy old gentleman who regards himself as an outraged commoner and declines to move when we shout "Fore!" at him. We should never be surprised if we saw some one playing in a weather-worn red coat. We feel that we ought to be talking not about Duncan and Mitchell, but about

old Tom Morris, or perhaps Tom Dunn who laid out the course and declared that "it would be one of the best in the country and second only to St. Andrews." We may find on the club-house shelf Mr. Hutchinson's delightful *Hints on Golf*, in its faded greenish-blue cover, and feel that here we ought to read no more modern golfing literature.

Berkhamsted is one such course on a common, and very good it is as well as very pretty. It is not too long, yet of a good length; the gorse waits on either side to punish the smallest aberration in the tee shot, and the greens are beautiful. Limpsfield is another, and so is Holtye in Kent, full of a rural and archaic charm. Every golfer can supply his own instances: the emotion produced in every case is the same and quite unmistakable.

On one or two courses on public commons, which are not so countrified, we must needs walk with silent awe-stricken feet as if on holy ground. Nowhere is this instinct more strongly felt than on Blackheath, where men have been playing since the reign of James I. and the club-house is full of old clubs and old pictures and old punch-bowls, the relics of jovial golfers long since departed. We know their names from the records of the Club, and how one presented a haunch of venison "out of the Duke of Rutland's park," and another gave his "marriage noggin" on a happy occasion and had his health drunk with acclamation, as was also some year or so later that of the "young golferess" who had by that time appeared. Every golfer ought to make a pilgrimage to Blackheath, for it is like no other golf in the world. The

pilgrim may not like it: but it may be wholesome by taking a little conceit out of him and also a little over-fastidiousness as to lies and putting-greens. And, if he has eyes to see, he will notice that here is rather a different conception of the game of golf from that to which he has been accustomed. For instance, he may see two old gentlemen in red coats, apparently playing together but walking a long way apart. His first notion will be that they have quarreled. Not at all. Each one of them is taking what he believes the proper line to the hole: they do not agree, but each may be perfectly right. Here are no clear-cut fairway and hard and fast lines of rough. There is the hole in the distance, where stands the fore caddie, and each old gentleman can get there as best he pleases. One may elect to take a short cut: plunge into the ravine and hack his way through the bare and flinty lies that he finds at the bottom. The other will skirt round it, making a detour which he deems politic. There is plenty of scope for taking your own line of country at Blackheath. There is also scope for patience and resource. The pilgrim must not expect that everything will necessarily be made easy for him if he plays the orthodox shot according to the book. He will see a hole on a narrow triangle of turf, in front of which runs a hard high road. "Oh," says he, "a pitch": but if he pitches over the road he will never stay on that green. He may decide to pitch his ball on the road, or even short of it, and trust to the bound. He may, if he likes, play a running shot. There is a wrong shot, which is the unimaginative copy-book one: but there is no necessarily right one. The best shot

will be the one that gets nearest the hole and it will be futile to accuse his adversary of fluking. Equally futile to lament if his own ball ends, as it very likely will, under the perpendicular granite edge of the road. This is golf at Blackheath: he must just make the best of it and, if he honestly tries to do so, he will get out of it both amusement and instruction.

There is another public course of historic traditions which is very interesting and very singular, namely, that on the North Inch of Perth. Here played the old and young Tom Morris, old Willie Park, and Bob Andrews, "the Rook," the greatest of Perth golfers and other great men of a bygone day. Indeed golf has been played there from time immemorial. I once wrote rather too flippantly about it and felt guilty afterwards. So I will say no more than this, that it is worth the seeing and possesses the most difficult hole in the world. The green is a tiny one set on a little triangular island. To the left within a few yards of the flag is the rapid Tay: behind and to the right is a stagnant ditch that harbours predatory little boys: in front is a big bunker which, when I saw it, was full of water. One long full shot would, I suppose, reach the green, but who would be mad enough to try it? Marshal Joffre was credited with the statement that he was "nibbling" at the Germans. That is the plan of campaign for this historic hole. Nibble at it. Take as many small bites as you please: a large mouthful would be fatal.

The neighbourhood of London, and more particularly the county of Surrey, is now full of admirable courses, of which the ingredients are sand, heather,

and fir-trees. Sunningdale, Walton Heath, Woking, Swinley Forest, St. George's Hill, Worplesdon, Addington, Coombe Hill, Camberley Heath—these are only some of them. They differ greatly in details, but there is a general similarity between them. They have all been made by a more or less ruthless attack upon nature. Some by the rooting up of heather only, others by laying waste whole forests and blowing up the roots of the trees with dynamite. They represent the last word in the architect's triumphal achievement. Really to appreciate them one should first see the place where the course is to be, if possible before a tree is cut. I spent a long, fine winter day with Mr. Colt at St. George's Hill while it was yet untouched, and we had often to fight our way through brambles and thick undergrowth. I remember some of the pretty little nooks and corners in the woods, but I have never been able to identify them on the course as it is to-day. The whole face of nature has been changed, and where we walked and where was the dell under the big trees in which we ate our sandwiches, I have not now the faintest idea. It is all a woodland dream. In the same way I saw Mr. Abercromby's two creations, Coombe Hill and Addington, when they were still very much in the rough, and have the same tangled recollections, which will not fit in with the courses as they are. It is a mystifying experience, and nothing is quite so mysterious as the way in which the architect can map out his whole course in considerable detail when in many places he can only see a few yards in front of him. True, he has a map to work on, and "experientia does it," as Mrs. Micawber's papa used

to say; but even so, the man must surely have a sixth sense, some inexplicable gift akin to the water-finder's.

When they are finally made, these courses have a good many features in common. Glades of green radiate this way and that from the club-house, fringed on either side with darker heather or trees. They are generally what I may call sound protestant courses, because there is no room there for the doctrine of purgatory. We are either in heaven on the fairway, or in hell in the rough. This affects different golfers in different ways. Some suffer badly from claustrophobia: others rather enjoy the sensation of having a perfectly definite amount of licence allowed them and no more. Those two clear-cut lines make it easier for them to do what all do not find easy, namely, to aim straight and get their feet in their right places. I have known those who played habitually on heathery courses to be utterly at sea, when they came to one where the rough was of the same colour as the fairway. They feel that they can drive "all over the place," and do so accordingly and most disastrously.

A profuse exhibition of fiendishly ingenious short holes is another feature of these courses. Once upon a time two out of eighteen was considered the orthodox and respectable number of short holes, because there were two at St. Andrews. Gradually the number has been increased, till at Addington we find six ranging from a chip with a mashie-niblick to a full brassy shot. And wonderfully good these short holes are as a rule, with their hog's back ridges to kick the ball away that is played well but not quite well enough, and their greedy pot-bunkers that come cranking and



serpentine right into the green with never a hint of leniency anywhere.

All this is in a way artificial: it is very unlike that simple natural golf on a common, where we cannot cut down the gorse to put a hole there, but put the hole where there is no gorse. But it is saved from the ugliness and stiltedness of artifice by the skill of the architect. He may be said to have learned to alter and improve upon nature by imitating nature. Give him only a flat bit of ground, and he will make you banks and braes and plateaux that might have been imported from St. Andrews. But he only does that when he is forced to do it. First of all he uses the natural roll of the ground, for he has realised that a ridge can be just as effective a defence to a green as an artificial bunker, and a great deal prettier.

As contrasted with the heathery courses the park courses cast a gentle melancholy upon the soul. They give me in imagination a feeling of water oozing in over the tops of my shoes from the long wet grass: of worm-casts and lumps of mud adhering to the ball on the green: of finding the ball wreathed round by the fantastic roots of a tree. And yet the golf is often both good and interesting. What is it that makes it sometimes comparatively dull? I am inclined to think that one reason is to be found in the rough, which consists only of thick and matted grass. It is thoroughly efficient: it punishes the crooked player, but efficiency is not necessarily thrilling: efficient people are often abominably tedious company. There is an often-quoted saying of a well-known Scottish golfer when asked as to a certain kind of grass: "There is only

one kind of grass—green grass.” That is too often the trouble in a park: the rough and the fairway are both green grass: we miss the purple of the heather sadly.

Trees again are not wholly cheering when, as often on a park course, they are large and solitary trees that stand as sentinels, or sometimes in pairs as goal-posts with the green for the goal. It may be cogently argued that they are very good hazards indeed. They punish the crooked and high shot as well as the crooked and low one, being living negations of the statement that “there are no hazards in the air.” They do not punish equally and that we ought to forgive them, for it is a dull game if there is no luck at all. But they sometimes help with too gross a partiality a very bad shot, and when they do punish they do so in an aggravating manner. To be stymied by a tree trunk and have to putt the ball out on to the fairway is a dull business, nor does it strike one as real golf to try to hit a half-topped shot under overhanging branches at the imminent risk of the ball bounding revengefully back. No, too many trees are depressing. Yet if there are none the game in a park lacks incident.

It was to remedy this state of things that the art of humping and hollowing was given us. The Mid-Surrey course in the Old Deer Park at Richmond is the classic example of “humps and hollows.” It is hard when we play there now to remember it as it used to be. Then there was nothing but two little spinneys, a stray tree or two, a carpet of fine turf centuries old, and a number of very bad bunkers cut in meticulously straight lines across the course and having perpendicu-

lar edges. To-day there are everywhere artistically irregular chains of grassy hills with little pits of sand nestling here and there amongst them. There are greens guarded and flanked on either side by grassy hollows: there are plateau greens that dominate the surrounding lowlands. All this is obviously artificial: the ground is so flat that the most skilful architecture cannot deceive us altogether: but it is a marvellous transformation. A friend of mine says that the course provides an examination in golf rather than a game of golf. It is not an altogether unjust criticism, but I think he underrates the good fun to be got out of being examined there.

This chapter only deals with types, of course, and so there are many famous links left unmentioned—Westward Ho! for instance, and Deal and Muirfield. But there is one inland course that must have a separate word or two, because it is not quite like any other. It is, I think, or rather it will be when more trampled and hardened by the human foot, the best I ever saw. This is Gleneagles in Perthshire. It can hardly be assigned to any known type. It is hilly in that we climb up steep hills and long for a moving staircase. Yet we do not play up and down the hills, but along the narrow winding valleys in between them that have a reminiscent flavour of Sandwich. It is not a typical heather course, though there is heather there, and very thick heather, too. The turf is excellent and yet it is not a sandy course, for I believe the sand had to be imported for the bunkers. There are a few trees and plenty of rough and tenacious grass: yet anything less like a park course cannot be imagined. More than

anything else it impresses one with its grandeur: it is conceived on a bigger scale than any other course I ever saw, the nearest approach in this respect to it being the National Golf Links on Long Island. Not even champions can make it look small, and how dreadfully small it makes us all look who are not champions! To stand on the tee to a certain hole known as "Braid's brawest" with the wind blowing against one is to feel like a pigmy attempting to hit a cannon ball. If any young spark wants to appreciate his exact position in the golfing firmament he had better go to Gleneagles. He will not come back a sadder man, for it is a glorious spot, but he should certainly come back a wiser one.

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## *Chapter X. Problems of Handicapping*

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SOME years ago now, before the war, I saw a friend of mine starting out to play a rather curious match. He was to play one-handed against the better ball of two opponents and to concede the odds of a stroke a hole. Not unnaturally the game took some time. I had left the club-house before it was over. Soon afterwards the hero of it left for India, and I have not seen him since. I am told that he is coming home this year, and the first question I am going to ask him when we meet is whether he won that match. At any rate his two adversaries could not complain of his lack of generosity, for I have never before or since heard of handicapping on quite so prodigal a scale.

As a general rule it is otherwise. In the immense majority of games, judging by results, the giver of odds is not liberal enough. We have only to look at the records of match-play tournaments under handicap, especially at those of the Calcutta Cup and the Jubilee Vase at St. Andrews, to see how often the players who are handicapped at scratch or better, come through triumphant. In these days of strikes and revolutions it is remarkable that the down-trodden thousands with handicaps in double figures, have not asked for more and got it. They are either very easily dragooned or else a false pride prevents them from acknowledging that they are generally beaten. Per-

haps they think that they ought to win if only they played what they are pleased to call their game. But in fact they don't play it, and they don't win.

It is probable that until the receiver of points receives palpably and absurdly too much, he will always have something the worst of it, because he will be to some extent crushed and overawed when he comes up against a golfer of a much higher class than himself. To be left far behind in point of length has a disturbing effect on all but the very level-headed. The stroke to be received seems to dwindle away to nothing. Yet of what enormous value is one stroke. I have played delightful matches against a distinguished naval officer who is neither very young nor very long but of an admirable steadiness. On the course where we play there is a large number of what are called two-shot holes—that is to say, holes such as I pretend to myself that I can do in four. My opponent with his first drive just clears the bunker from the tee: with his second he is comfortably short of the bunker guarding the green: with his third he is on the green and he is a good putter. If I have to give him a stroke—and I give him too many—the outlook at these holes is a cheerless one for, whatever I pretend, I am by no means good enough to do them all in fours. It is only at the really long holes, or at the short ones when there are some nice deep bunkers, that I begin to pluck up hope against that terrible sailor. If all who receive strokes cut their coat according to their cloth, so judiciously and methodically, what a lot more matches they would win.

If the receiver of odds often grows frightened and

regards his allowance as a mere drop in the ocean, there is also another form of fright that afflicts him at times. His strokes appear so numerous that he begins to reflect how foolish he will look if he cannot win with them. With a player in this mood, it is very nearly true that the more strokes you give him the more easily you will beat him. A little while ago there was a discussion on the handicapping question between two players, neither of them very good, of whom A. should officially have given B. about a third or a half. A. was contending that people did not give enough strokes: B. hotly denied it. "Very well," said A., "if you will play on the course I choose I will give you two strokes a hole." The match was made for a considerable stake. A., knowing that his one hope lay in the complete paralysis of B., took him to a course of steep hills and thick heather. Paralysis duly set in: B. topped his drives into the heather and could not get out again. He lost his match and his money, and has resolutely declined ever to play golf again.

I am sometimes inclined to wonder whether the receiver of points did not fare better when there was no pretence that handicapping was an exact science. Golfers either played level or, if odds must clearly be given, then they were given on broad general lines—four strokes as a minimum, and more usually a third or a half. The receiver would not accept charity in small doles or odd amounts, the giver thought shame to be too niggardly and huckstering. To-day everything is systematic, and the better player gives three-quarters of the difference between the two handicaps and no more. If every one were rightly handicapped

and the system were perfect, it would be all very well. As it is the giver of odds gets the best of it, unless he be one of those whose small vanities are treated sympathetically by committees and of whom it has been said that it costs them a hundred a year to remain scratch players.

It is often said that three-quarters of the difference is not a sufficient allowance. Sometimes it is and sometimes it is not, and there will always be an insuperable difficulty in having a hard and fast rule for all sorts of courses. At Westward Ho! for example, to take one of the hardest of all courses, it is generally not enough, and some years ago when a tournament was played there with the full difference in strokes given, the givers had none the worst of it. At Ranelagh, to take the opposite extreme, it would probably be too much. On a great many inland courses which are not very long or very difficult, it ought to be quite sufficient. Even so much depends on the season and the state of the course. Heavy ground will favour the stronger player. When winter comes, for instance, and the ball sits very close to the ground and declines to run, I am not nearly so frightened of that naval friend of mine. He may then be sometimes seen sadly practising, under the erroneous impression that he is out of form. When the ground is hard and dry in summer and two-shot holes degenerate into what the late Mr. "Teddy" Buckland called "a kick and a spit," the giving of strokes is hard work. The better player's hopes rest no longer on his length but rather on his power, if he has it, of making the ball stop on the keen, hard green. I do not know that there is any



reliable remedy for this state of things as regards players who casually make up a match and do not know each other's games, but those who play habitually together need not be hidebound by rules and the rough and ready labels that are called handicaps. They can make their own matches best by the light of their own experience. If I know, by the half-crown test, that X. can give me a third, I am not going to be so foolish as to play him at four strokes because some old gentlemen sitting in a committee room have labelled him "scratch" and me "five." Unless one party be very grasping or the other very conceited, two friends can make their own matches far better than any one else can do it for them.

Besides the orthodox method of handicapping by strokes there are various others, the giving of bisques and holes up, and in three-ball matches there is the better and also the worse ball match. There are also all manner of what may be called "freak" handicaps. Of the matches made under freak handicaps it may be said that they are good fun to talk about and poor fun to play. More generally they are talked about and not played. I remember a lawn-tennis match that was projected between the late Mr. "Laurie" Doherty and a certain plump and dignified friend of his and mine. The articles of agreement provided that Mr. Doherty could only win a point by causing the ball to strike his opponent's person. The match was much chuckled over in advance and then wisely abandoned. It had served its purpose, and would have proved a disappointment. The golf match in which Alfred Toogood played blindfolded against a scratch player at Sun-

ningdale created great interest beforehand and was the very dullest I ever watched in my life. The classic match in which one party was allowed three sudden "Boos" in his opponent's ear and won without using any of them, was probably, if ever played at all, ineffably gloomy and tiresome after the first hole.

There is a form of match sometimes played in which the two players start level. As soon as the stronger player becomes one up he gives a stroke at the next hole, and continues to give a stroke a hole as long as he is up. This may sound exciting. It does provide a close match but also a dull one, for the better man has no great incentive to bestir himself, since by doing so he only hangs a load of debt in the shape of strokes round his neck. The match usually comes to the last hole and there is some small scope for manœuvring, but it too much resembles an unpaced bicycle race in which the riders crawl round lap after lap, waiting for one frenzied burst in the last.

There is something a little freakish about bisques. They are perhaps "no gowf at a", just monkey tricks," but they often produce excellent matches and give scope for generalship. The receiver of bisques must study his adversary's temper and his own. To crowd on all sail and take bisques freely at the beginning of a match may be very good tactics against a player who is easily cowed, but it is of little avail against a dour man who plays better when he is down. We shall then very likely find ourselves stranded high and dry in the middle of the match with no bisques left, a horrid feeling of loneliness, and a strong probability that we

shall have that hardest of tasks in all golf, namely, to play up against a decreasing lead.

Against the average opponent it is best if possible to hold a bisque or two, like so many swords of Damocles, over his head. Not only does this give him an unpleasant consciousness of outstanding liabilities but, if he is very imaginative, it keeps him guessing at every hole. Of course it is possible to cling too firmly to a bisque, and to be left with it unused at the end of the round can be as irritating as to be left with a too carefully treasured ace at bridge. I remember a match I once played at Aberdovey the thought of which even now sets me chortling joyfully. My opponent was two up with four holes to play and he had two bisques in hand. He could almost have had me beaten by that time: certainly he could have been dormy, but he enjoyed the refinement of cruelty of keeping me on tenterhooks, or perhaps he had vain visions of winning with a bisque or two unused. Now the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth at Aberdovey are holes of no great length. They have two features—trouble which may be calamitous, and greens in dells where a lucky approach shot may end very near the hole. The enemy found the trouble; he took six each to those three holes: I had the lucky approach shots and got three threes, and so he had to stand by impotent, his two bisques being no good to him till I became dormy one. He duly halved the match with them at the last hole, but could aught atone? My friend Christopher, if you chance to read this chapter, I am sure you will not have forgotten that match. I trust that something of

bitterness, though not enough to endanger our friendship, may still rise at the remembrance.

Holes make rather an unsatisfactory handicap because they tend to a runaway match one way or the other. The man who gets first off the mark is too apt to win easily. If the receiver of holes adds to his lead in the first two or three, his pursuer grows faint-hearted. If, on the other hand, he loses his lead at the beginning, he feels that he is caught in a trap from which there is no escape. If we were all perfectly level-headed and undaunted these things would not happen, but we are not and they do happen. Moreover, if the difference between the two players is considerable, it is rather a depressing game for the weaker. He may or may not win with his six holes of a start, but he feels that each hole is a match that he has to play on level terms and his hopes centre too exclusively round the other man's mistakes. True, we nearly always win by the enemy's mistakes. "He didn't beat me—I beat myself, sir, I beat myself," I remember hearing Taylor say once with formidable emphasis and fierce shaking of his head. All the same when we win, it is pleasanter to think that we have something to do with it.

Our handicaps are given us by handicapping committees, and the members of those committees are among the many virtuous and hard-working creatures in the world who get more kicks than halfpence for their pains. They have two classes of discontented people to deal with—those who think they have not enough strokes and those who think they have too many. On the whole our vanity is greater than our

greed, and I am disposed to think that the second class is the larger of the two. At any rate it is the more difficult to deal with, for it contains a certain number of persons with whom some natural sympathy is felt. They are getting older and shorter and not so good as they were, and in conversation or even in match making they are not above acknowledging the fact, but they do not like to be publicly branded on the handicapping list. Those are often particularly susceptible who have after much pains and labour arrived at the scratch mark. Scratch is very far from meaning what it does in America or in the Ladies' Golf Union, but still it implies a certain honourable status. To be kicked upstairs from it is an unpleasant shock, and golfers who have once been scratch seem, like those "in reduced circumstances," to wear a certain air of faded gentility and "murmur a little sadly" of their past splendours. To have once been "one" is not the same thing at all.

Towards this very human infirmity committees as a rule exhibit considerable tenderness, for they argue very naturally, "If old So-and-so likes to lose his half-crowns, it's his own look-out. Why should we hurt his feelings?" Really there seems no reason why they should, unless they are impelled to it by a sense of duty, and an excessive sense of duty is one of the least attractive of human characteristics.

I should rather have said that there *was* no reason why they should. Now that the question of limiting the entries to the Championship by handicaps has become an urgent one, there is a good reason for showing neither fear nor favour. At the present time the

Championship committee is proposing to tackle the handicapping problem by trying to set up some kind of standard. It is a hard task, but if the thing can be well done it is worth doing.

It is, I think, admitted that the foundation must be the "par" score of the course for which the handicap is framed. It is not a perfect standard, because the par of St. Andrews and the par of a course where most of the holes can be reached with a drive and a pitch may be approximately the same; yet it takes a champion to accomplish the one and a very ordinary mortal on his "day out" to do the other. Still, in estimating the par it may be possible to make some allowance for difficulties besides considering merely the length of the holes, and the par score, if estimated by those who know their business, is as near a constant standard as we can get. On this par score it is proposed to found a scratch score which a scratch player, playing well, should be able to accomplish.

The real difficulty seems to me the question whether there must be a national handicap as well as the individual club handicap. At first sight it would seem a very cumbrous business and to some extent it is so, but without both handicaps there appears no way of dealing with the man who, playing nearly all his golf on one course, naturally plays his best game there and perhaps persists in winning the monthly medal. These small triumphs hardly affect his general position as a golfer. When he comes to play in good company on other courses he takes his normal and proper place. But on the dunghill of which he is the cock he is a formidable person, and his handicap must be reduced

if his competitors are to have a fair chance, whether in match or medal play. It may be said that his handicap should not be reduced unless his performances justify it when judged by the scratch score; but if he continues to annex mustard-pots and half-crowns something has got to be done or there will be a revolution. The proper course, I suppose, would be to put up the handicaps of everybody else, but this is a laborious and unpopular course which would not work well in practice. Therefore I am reluctantly driven to the conclusion that, if anything be done at all, there ought to be two handicaps, a national and a club handicap, and without them I am afraid a general scheme would fail.

The Ladies' Golf Union is often and rightly held up to men as a model of business-like organisation, but even the ladies cannot altogether get on without two handicaps, and the L.G.U. handicap and the club handicap of one and the same player seem sometimes to differ very considerably. I doubt if men will ever come to having their handicaps quite so well regulated as those of the L.G.U., for men are either more lazy or less docile and will not constantly go to the trouble of returning a certain number of cards. At least I do not think they will, nor personally do I want them to, for after all handicaps were made for man and not man for his handicap.

THE watching of golf is unlike the watching of any other game. We cannot do it by sitting at our ease on a covered stand or on the top of a pavilion, even if those of us who have to do it professionally attain a certain indolent cunning in seeing a great deal from the top of a single sandhill. If we are to be conscientious onlookers we must walk with the players, and sometimes we must even run, though here again watching is something of an art, and an experienced spectator can see all the exciting essentials without losing his dignity or his breath.

So far golf does not seem nearly so good a game to watch as cricket or football or lawn-tennis. But the watcher of golf, if he gives himself the trouble, can see a great deal more than the watcher of these other games. He is close to the players, he can see, if he has eyes, how they make their strokes and how they fail. And for studying the psychology of the combatants there is no game like golf. We can see almost every twitch of a nerve-racked muscle. We can see the men's faces. We can hear what they say. A hard-fought match at golf is often rather a cruel spectacle. If we have any imagination and can picture to ourselves what is passing in the players' minds, we feel as if we were going to watch a bull-fight or to see a man hanged. If we do not care greatly which



side wins, it is horribly, ghoulishly amusing: we may feel very sorry for both parties, but we cannot restrain a malicious grin now and again. I remember very well a match in which both parties threw the last hole backwards and forwards at one another like a shuttlecock. There were some who laughed and I do not wonder, but an American friend of mine reproved them. "Remember," he protested, "what our admiral said to his men when the Spanish ship was going down: 'Don't cheer, boys: they're dying.'"

He was perhaps asking too much; and, even when the golf is not ridiculous but sublime, you may hear a sort of hysterical giggle pass through the crowd. In the tensest moment at a theatre there is often a laugh, and so there are some people who see something irresistibly humorous in a long putt going down or an approach laid dead at the hole side.

As to a match in which we care very much who wins, I am sure we can feel quite as pitiably sick and nervous as ever the protagonists can. Especially is this so when the players are both making mistakes. It is worst of all, perhaps, when one of them, and that our favourite, has had the match safely "in his pocket" and then begins to throw his lead away. I suppose there never was greater agony endured by a crowd than in watching the last five holes of the final at Muirfield between Mr. Tolley and Mr. Gardner, when Mr. Tolley stood three up with four to play, ought to have won the match by four up and three to play, and then had to do his gallant and historic two at the thirty-seventh hole to win at all. Almost equally exciting, and by contrast not in the least distressing (ex-

cept to the players), was the final at Muirfield in 1909 between Mr. Maxwell and Major Cecil Hutchison. The play went so smoothly and evenly, there were so few mistakes or hurling away of chances or big ups and downs, that there was no anguish and only enjoyment in the watching. There was for the most part a mechanical precision about the golf hole after hole, or so it seems now to me in recollecting it. It was more like a professional than an amateur match; and just because professionals are not liable to such palpable breakdowns and do not make such big mistakes at critical moments, except, indeed, sometimes upon the green, I think it is the matches in the Amateur Championship that produce the most poignant sensations in the watchers' breasts.

It is rather in score play, perhaps, that the professionals give us the thrills which we feel in the pits of our stomachs. The culminating round of the Open Championship is like nothing else. We are then watching only one man instead of two, or perhaps we have to be in three places at once and watching three men. The element of the duel to the death is absent, but we feel the strain of the single man's struggle against his own nerves and against the forces of nature with painful acuteness. Sometimes the last round resolves itself into a triumphant procession for one player. Only some overwhelming catastrophe can stop him winning, but the catastrophe is always possible. We can never feel quite easy, for instance, till he has left the sixteenth and seventeenth holes at St. Andrews behind him. Then, when he has only the burn to cross and can afford six or so for the last hole,

the worst of the tension is over; but there remains the most dramatic moment of all in which the conquering hero comes breaking his way through the crowd, to hole his last putt with the great black ring of people all round him.

Each one of us remembers with peculiar vividness a different match or a different moment or stroke in the same match. We each have our own personal point of view which colours the incidents that we see. This chapter does not profess to contain detailed and impartial records of the greatest rounds or the greatest matches, but consists rather of my own impressions of some of them which have stuck most firmly in my head. If some of these do not agree with those of other people who were also present, I can only point in extenuation to the fact that no two people who saw Cobden's famous over in the University match of 1870 can ever agree as to what exactly happened. That was much longer ago, to be sure, than any golf matches I can describe, but memory is quickly blurred and human evidence very fallible.

I think that the two amateur golfers who as match players will be longest and most clearly remembered by every one who watched them, are Mr. John Ball and the late Mr. F. G. Tait. The image of Mr. Hilton we recall rather in connection with some of his triumphs in score play. I hope we may yet see Mr. Ball in a big fight again, but if we do not we can always conjure up his figure in the mind's eye, the bent knee (beloved of the caricaturist), the body leaning forward, the rose in his button-hole (if it is the final of a Championship), the air of placid doggedness that

takes the rough with the smooth and seems to say that everything—bunkers and long putts holed and short ones missed—is all in the day's work. Mr. Tait gave an extraordinary impression of quiet and yet buoyant confidence. There is a celebrated cricketer to whom the remark used to be attributed, "No man living can get me out to-day." A friend quoted it to me again the other day as applicable to Mr. Tait's outlook in a golf match. It does convey something of it, for I think he had the blessed faculty of never envisaging defeat. But it might also give an impression of some arrogance of demeanour. That would be an absolutely false one. Mr. Low in his biography has told us that Tait loved a crowd and he rose to the occasion before one, but no one ever seemed less conscious of its being there or had less disposition to play to the gallery.

These two had many fights, but the one that most people will remember best was that in the final at Prestwick in 1899, when Mr. Ball, having been at one time five down in the morning round, won at the thirty-seventh hole. I am not going to tell all over again the story of Mr. Tait's shot out of the water in the Alps bunker. It has been told very often. One little incident about it sticks in my mind. As Mr. Tait waded into the big deep puddle he made little ripples flit across its face, and the ball began to rock ever so slightly where it floated. The late Mr. John Gairdner, most patriotic of Scottish golfers, was standing close to me, and I remember his calling out in an agony of apprehension, "Wait till it stops, Freddy, wait till it

stops." I doubt if he realised that he was speaking at all.

Another scene is of Mr. Ball practising putting on the home green, before the second round began, with Mr. Hilton trying to set him on the right track. He had been putting very poorly in the morning, trying different clubs and different stances, all more or less in vain. For this lesson from Mr. Hilton he brought out three clubs, his crook-necked putter, his straight-faced iron, and his driving cleek. The conference arrived at some conclusion as to what was wrong and Mr. Ball putted much better in the afternoon, but he still, if I remember rightly, coquetted at times with these three different clubs. I read a long account of the match again the other day, and thought how lacking in dramatic sense the writer was not even to mention these changes of club, and how I wished I could remember them exactly. There was one horrid moment (I write as an Englishman who passionately desired Mr. Ball to win). He had lopped off all Mr. Tait's half-time lead of three and stood one up at the tenth hole. Then his old disease attacked him and he missed a short putt at the eleventh. I can see him standing there and the little beast of a ball sitting obdurately on the edge of the hole.

At the twelfth there came a compensating joy. Mr. Tait made one of those astonishingly crooked shots of which he was now and again capable: he hooked the ball clean over the burn and out of bounds. The ball soared over the heads of the spectators on the left; many of them were completely unconscious of it and could not understand why he was playing a second

ball. Of the final putt for that wonderful three on the thirty-seventh I saw, through somebody else's legs, only the blessed moment of the ball going into the hole. The player I could not see. Mr. Hilton was in the converse situation. He could see the player but not the ball. "From where we stood," he says, "we could not see the outline of the hole, and it was impossible to tell whether the ball was going in or not, but I liked the look of the striker as his ball was travelling. I knew his attitudes well, and was not at all surprised when the ball disappeared." I like that little bit of description. It is so typical of his powers of observation, and illustrates so well those crucial seconds of waiting that have to be endured in watching golf.

Another unforgettable match of Mr. Tait's was that against Mr. John Low in the semi-final at Hoylake in 1898. Mr. Tait ultimately won at the twenty-second hole. In a sense he certainly did not deserve to, for his opponent played far the sounder golf of the two, but the winner made two or three recovering shots of so prodigious a character that it seems ungenerous to call him lucky. I was in an ungenerous mood at the time, since I very badly wanted Mr. Low to win. To begin with, it seemed to me a match between a demigod and a man. It was my first Championship. I had only gazed awe-stricken on Mr. Tait from afar, when he came from Aldershot to Woking. Mr. Low I knew quite well: I had played with him, nay, I believe I had even won a casual round from him. I did not think that so human a person could withstand the godlike Tait. But as the round went on it was clear that he could. He was playing much the more stead-

ily of the two on a raw, blustery Hoylake day, and it seemed only by a series of miracles that Mr. Tait was not down. One of his shots certainly was miraculous. At the sixteenth—the Dun—he put his tee shot into the sandy ditch that guards the out-of-bounds country: got the ball out not very far, and then carried right home over the cross-bunker on to the green. Mr. Hilton has said that it was a carry of 200 yards: and that was with a gutty ball, let us not forget. It looked about a quarter of a mile, and for sheer carrying power at a crisis I have never seen that shot's equal. The match was all square with one to go, and Mr. Low's second over the bunker at the home hole had not too much to spare. I can see him now, as plain as print, in an old grey coat of voluminous folds with the collar turned up, urging on the ball with a wave of his club. That hole was halved: so was the nineteenth. At the twentieth my man was surely going to get his deserts at last. He was dead in three: Mr. Tait was away across the green in the grip in two and six to eight yards short in three, and—down went his putt with a horrid thud against the tin. Worse still was to come. Mr. Low was home in three sound shots at the twenty-first. Mr. Tait went out of bounds, and his one hope, and that a slender one, was to put his fourth not only on the green but close to the hole with a wooden-club shot. It seems to me now, in remembering it, another vast carrying shot. In point of fact it was not enormously long, but it was beautifully struck. Some people say that the ball hit a mole-heap and kicked in towards the hole. At any rate it left him within a few yards of the hole. Even so he

surely could not be going to hole another putt—but he did, and got his half in five. Flesh and blood could hardly stand up against this. On the Cop green Mr. Low and his putter failed for once, and the match was over.

In 1912, at Westward Ho! there was a wonderful finish between Mr. Ball and Abe Mitchell, then an amateur, Mr. Ball winning at the thirty-eighth hole. Mr. Ball was being outdriven by many yards from the tee in the first round, and was “hanging on” for dear life. He was three down at lunch-time. In the afternoon there came on squalls and flurries of rain, and it was this, I think, that beat the younger player and won the match for the veteran. In remembering it I always think of the account of the prize-fight in *Lavengro*, when the boy is fighting the man and there comes on a great storm of hail and rain: “The boy strikes the man full on the brow, but it is no use striking that man, his frame is adamant. Boy, thy strength is beginning to give way, thou art becoming confused; the man now goes to work amidst rain and hail.” And Mr. Ball did go to work that afternoon. He was reported to have said that if he could halve the first three holes, which gave his opponent the advantage in length, he would just about win. He went one better and won one of the three. It was not very long before he had the match squared. Once he was one up, but Mitchell stuck to his guns most gamely and with three to go they were all square. At the sixteenth, Mr. Ball was laid what appeared the deadest of dead stymies. He studied the line and looked up at his adversary with a half smile and a little shake of his



head; and then using an aluminium putter he played the putt with the right strength to a fraction of an inch: the ball just reached the edge of the hole, hesitated, and fell in. At the seventeenth, Mr. Ball was bunkered in his second and Mitchell became dormy one. At the eighteenth, both were about four feet away in three. With "this for the Championship" Mitchell played the odd, pushed the ball out to the right, and missed: down went the like and the match was squared. The first extra hole was halved in five, Mitchell making a glorious recovery from the wet ditch to the left of the green. The crowd rushed forward towards the second hole. One ball came straight down the middle—that was Mr. Ball's. Then came a mysterious pause—there was no other ball—what had happened? We ran back to see and discovered it was all over. Mitchell had topped his drive into a ditch, and with his second attempt at getting out had played the ball on to himself.

I have already mentioned last year's match between Mr. Tolley and Mr. Gardner. It is recent history, but I will set it down as I recall it now before memory becomes indistinct. Almost all the rest of the match seems to be obliterated by that tremendous finish. Mr. Gardner had been two up at lunch. He had begun a little weakly in the afternoon, and Mr. Tolley had seized his chance and played up magnificently. He was two up at the twelfth, frittered away a glorious chance at the thirteenth, which he only halved, but won the fourteenth in a great three. He was three up and four to play, and had for the moment fought Mr. Gardner to a standstill. At the fifteenth, Mr. Gard-

ner was barely on the green in two, and it was odds against his getting a four. Mr. Tolley had hit a fine drive: in all human probability he had only to put his pitch-and-run approach somewhere on the green to win the match by four and three and the Championship. "Only"—yes, but that second is a nasty shot at the best of times, for the green is fast and runs away from the player and at the far end of it is a bunker. The temptation is to be short. Mr. Gardner had yielded to it. Mr. Tolley no doubt determined that he would not. He hit his shot all too well and truly. "In off the club," we groaned, and the ball raced across the green into the bunker. It might often not have mattered so greatly: he might have got his five and with it a half. But this time—'twas ever thus—the fates were unrelenting. The ball lay very near the further edge of the bunker, which interfered with the swing of the club. The ball did not come out the first time and the hole cost Mr. Tolley six shots.

Two up with three to go is in itself a pleasant position, but not when five minutes before the match seemed won. "Holes falling away like snow off a dyke," we quoted to one another. "Anything may happen now," was the prevailing impression. Sure enough Mr. Tolley took six to the long sixteenth, playing none of the shots very ill but none very well, and now he was only one up. The seventeenth was one long-drawn-out series of emotions—first hope, then despair, then a revulsion of joy. Both were weak with their seconds. Mr. Gardner played the odd and was weak again—he must have been half a dozen yards short. Mr. Tolley got within six or eight feet. He

would have that putt, we thought, to win, and the worst that could happen would be a half in five. But we reckoned without Mr. Gardner, who gallantly holed his long putt. That was despair. Then Mr. Tolley put his in, too—a great effort at such a moment. That was the revulsion of joy. Still things were far from pleasant, for Mr. Gardner was now the hunter, Mr. Tolley the hunted, and moreover Mr. Gardner always played the last hole well. And he played it perfectly again this time in four. Mr. Tolley was just trapped in a rush with a very long drive and could not beat a five. All square and all to play for. It was a dreadful moment, but Mr. Tolley by his courageous play at the last two holes had clearly got himself in hand once more, and we felt that his bolt was not shot. He holed a great putt for two, as all the world knows, and never was a ball more boldly hit against the back of the tin, but he deserves every bit as much credit for his tee shot. Plump had gone Mr. Gardner's ball on to the green first. It was a bad shot to have to follow and Mr. Tolley improved on it. One great recovering spurt followed by another: what better finish can one ever hope to see?

It always seems to me that the most memorable Open Championships I have watched have been those which Taylor has won. Yet Taylor when he wins nearly always wins easily. He takes on one of his irresistible moods and leaves his field like a streak of lightning. There is no desperately close struggle, but there is drama and to spare, nevertheless. Taylor often begins with a little misfortune and emerges like a man transfigured. It was thus in the Championship

at Deal in 1909. Everything seemed to be going wrong by inches for him in the first nine holes and he was making heavy weather of it. Looking on I felt a sort of giggling, schoolboy desire that some tactless spectator should speak to Taylor, in order that I might see him stricken to the earth. With the turn of the round came the turn of the tide. Taylor holed a putt for three at the tenth and there was no holding him. He came home like a roaring lion, and for the next three rounds he played with his most unvarying and brilliant accuracy. It was clear that there could not possibly be another champion. There was nobody else to watch.

It was much the same in Hoylake in 1913, though in that case the misfortune, very nearly a fatal one, came in the qualifying round and not in the actual Championship. Taylor was left with a five at the last hole to qualify. He hit a good tee shot and then did the one thing that could put him in jeopardy: he was weak with his second and was caught in the big cross-bunker in front of the green. All the afternoon he had been fighting hard: the strain seemed over, and now in a moment it was worse than it had ever been before. Number three sent the ball out of the bunker and over the green. Number four was well enough played but left the ball anything but dead. Exactly how long number five was I am not now prepared to swear, but it was many more feet long than any of us like at a crisis. However, in the ball went, and as it dropped some one said: "I believe Taylor will go right ahead now and win the whole thing." And so he did. The wind blew and the rain beat against the

players. With his cap down and his coat collar up, Taylor hit the ball through it all like an arrow from the bow and beat Ray, who was second, by eight strokes.

The man who, having once been down is now up, is always to be feared, and this is more true of Taylor than of any other golfer. Only once can I recall his throwing away his advantage in such a position. That was at the Open Championship at Prestwick in 1914. The situation was a poignant one. Both he and Vardon had won five Championships. On the first day Vardon was leading; Taylor was close behind him and they were drawn to play together on the second day. There was a large and unruly mob of spectators, and nearly all of them wanted to watch this one couple. By lunch-time Taylor had almost reduced Vardon's lead to vanishing point. After lunch he went off like a shot out of a gun, and when three holes had been played he himself held a lead of two strokes. According to all precedent he would go further and further ahead completely irresistible. But the tee shot to the fourth hole at Prestwick is a narrow one, if the nearest line to the hole is taken. On the right is the Pow burn: on the left at just the distance of a good tee shot is a bunker. Some people prefer to pull far away to the left and make the longest way round the shortest way home. Taylor went by the straight road, pushed out his shot and was trapped in sand near the burn. Vardon played away to the left, put his second on the green and got his four. Taylor did not make a good recovery, got into more trouble and took seven. Three shots gone at one hole! No wonder his next

tee shot over the Himalayas had not a great deal to spare. Soon he was cold as ice again and fought resolutely, but he could never quite get into his stride nor catch Vardon. For once at the decisive moment he had taken the wrong turning.

Braid's Championships have been less exciting to watch than Taylor's, because he is more phlegmatic and less palpably influenced one way or the other by circumstances. But Prestwick seems bound to produce exciting scenes, and in Braid's Championship in 1908 there was a very real crisis. He held a good lead on the first day and was playing superbly. He seemed almost sure to win, though when he began his third round it was known that Tom Ball ahead of him had begun most brilliantly. Braid played the first two holes well, and then came the disaster at the Cardinal. I was standing close by that famous bunker and saw him a long way off taking a brassy from what looked like bad country. It seemed almost too bold, and bang came the ball into the bunker. No one dreamed of anything worse than a six, but at the next shot, also perhaps an overbold one, the ball glanced off the boards and flew out of bounds to the right. The next went the same way, and you could have heard a pin drop. With his fifth he was out at last—he tried for no more this time. Six on to the green and two putts made eight. But as Braid strode after his next tee shot with that slow methodical slouch of his, I do not think that any one of the onlookers awaiting him at the fourth green knew that anything had gone amiss. Certainly they could not guess it by as much as a flicker of Braid's eyelid. He did miss a shortish

putt for a four at that hole. Then he holed a downhill putt for two at the Himalayas. Confidence was completely restored, and the eight had become merely a regrettable incident. He finished that round in 77, had a 72 in the afternoon, and won by the length of the street!

I have mentioned Vardon's fight with Taylor at Prestwick. Another of his Championships was at Sandwich in 1911 and I have never seen another like it, for with only the last round to play any one out of half a dozen had a good chance of winning. To the reporter it was a nightmare of trying to be in six places at once and being told the most appalling lies by persons otherwise incapable of deception. Vardon ought to have won comfortably but his last round was the rather poor one of 80, and now Braid, Taylor, Herd, Ray, Duncan, Massy, and Mr. Hilton were after him like a pack of wolves. In one way or another the first five just failed to catch him: Herd wanted a four at the last hole and took six: but the real thrill and the real tragedy came with Mr. Hilton. He was five behind Vardon with one round to go. Then he began to play with almost fantastic brilliance. He had caught Vardon, he might win, he would win! An amateur holding the professionals once again!—it was too good to be true. I picked him up at the turn and saw him play the tenth and eleventh beautifully. To the twelfth his tee shot seemed perfect, played well away to the left on the safe and proper line. Alas! that bunker to the left has a little unseen jutting promontory of sand, and into it went Mr. Hilton's ball. He got out well enough: the hole did not ruin him, but it broke the

sequence of mechanically played holes and it lost him that Championship. The short sixteenth finished the business, for he took a five there and even so he only lost by a stroke. But the twelfth did it. I can still feel the sudden chill at the heart of seeing his ball in the little stony bit of bunker after I had felt certain it was clear.

In the end Massy tied with Vardon, only to be battered to pieces next day in the play-off. It was the old Vardon of years before come to life again. I have often seen lower scores done, but never more masterly and tremendous golf.

The *News of the World* Tournament has produced some great finishes, and I am not sure that it is not better fun watching the professionals in this match-play tournament than in the score play of the Championship. Taylor and Robson at Mid-Surrey in 1908 made a most dramatic final. Robson was quite young and little known; Taylor at his zenith and on his own course. But this audacious young man with the red head, who hit the ball such a long way, did not confine his audacity to outdriving Taylor. He actually was three up on him at lunch-time. In the afternoon Taylor was after him like a tiger. To all appearances he had the match in hand when he did something that he would scarcely do once in ten years—completely fluffed a clean-lying ball in the bunker near the tenth green. That gave Robson the fresh start he wanted, and the match was “all to play for” again. At last Taylor had a six-foot putt to win the match on the thirty-fifth green. He took out his handkerchief and mopped his



brow—and then missed. However, he made no mistake at the last, which he took in a glorious three.

Braid and Ray at Walton Heath in 1911 was another memorable finish. It was the only occasion that I can remember when Braid ever showed the slightest sign of (the phrase is now part of the language) "getting the wind up." He showed it, indeed, by no outward sign, but he was six up at one time in the last round and he only won on the last green. Ray certainly played some wonderful shots that afternoon, especially with his armoury of niblicks, and he putted finely, too. Braid must have felt horribly uncomfortable and he played a weak shot or two, but he rose to the occasion and played the last hole in four, and that is not easy. They are very patriotic people at Walton Heath. When they go away to watch a tournament they never watch any one but Braid, though they see him every day. I am not sure that the church bells are not tolled there when he is beaten. I have sometimes wondered what would have occurred if Ray had won that match. I am sure some of the ladies of Walton would have been discovered, as was Mr. Winkle after the trial, "groaning in a hollow and dismal manner with their heads buried beneath the sofa cushions."

Walton Heath saw another desperate fight in the first year after the war, when Abe Mitchell beat Duncan at the very last hole. Very often in a golf match the onlooker can say, "That is the turning point: So-and-so is going to win now," and he is nearly always right; but in this match there came a moment when every single golfer of any experience would have made a certain prophecy and he would have been wrong.

All day long Duncan had been having just a very little the worst of it. He had been chasing Mitchell, catching him up by a spurt and then seeing him go away again. With but nine holes left Mitchell seemed to have got away once and for all, for he was three up. Then with the wind blowing strongly on his back he began to slice: back came the three holes till the match was square with two to play. At the seventeenth, Duncan was home in two with the loveliest of spoon shots: Mitchell was away in rough to the left and ultimately by no means dead in four. Duncan had two for the hole. His tail was up and it was all Lombard Street to a China orange that he got his four and made himself dormy one. If he did that it was almost certain that he would play the last hole with triumphant accuracy and win the match. His first putt was not a good one: he dragged the ball to the left of the hole and was not quite dead. Mitchell must have thought his putt for five rather a forlorn hope, but still he took plenty of trouble and holed it manfully. And poor Duncan just missed his short putt and did not make himself dormy. To have been pursuing all day, to have the quarry at last in your grasp and then let it slip—this is the hardest thing to bear at golf. The whole situation changed in a flash. Duncan pushed his drive out into the heather and could do no better than a five. Mitchell, made his own man again by his reprieve, played the hole with perfect confidence and won it and the match. I said that golf was a cruel game. In that match it was at its cruellest.

The finishes of team matches can be painfully exciting, the more so since there is here little chance of in-

difference mercifully to numb the spectator's emotions. We must be praying for one side or the other and suffer the more. In the Amateur International Match there were two thrilling finishes in 1903 and in 1910, the years in which England won. I should add that Scotland won as a rule, and that easily. In 1910, at Hoylake, everything depended on Mr. C. V. L. Hooman, then an Oxford undergraduate, keeping a short lead against Mr. Edward Blackwell, and very gallantly he kept it to the end. In 1903 the match was all square and there remained the last hole at Muirfield to be played by the last couple, Mr. C. E. Dick of Scotland and Mr. G. F. Smith of England. It was a desperate moment, the more so because that last hole with its big cross-bunker took a good deal of reaching, and Mr. George Smith, though a truly admirable golfer, was not a very long driver. Both tee shots were on the course and Mr. Smith had to play the odd, a full bang with a wooden club. It was a *very* full bang, and there must have been an extra crease or two, I think, in that highly respectable black coat in which he always played golf; but he stood as firm and hit as truly as ever. Up came the ball, over the bunker but only just over and safely on the green; Mr. Dick retorted with an equally good cleek shot. The balls were almost equidistant from the hole and Mr. Dick had to play the odd. He had been putting magnificently. He seemed to take an age over that putt, though I daresay it was really only a few seconds, and then hit the ball rather more than halfway to the hole. Mr. Smith put his dead, or rather, since there is no dead on such an occasion, he put it very close. Mr. Dick made a great effort to retrieve

his first error and just failed: Mr. Smith, sedate and methodical as ever, popped his ball in and England won. It was a great finish, the more so because patriotic feeling always runs so high on Scottish courses. In the circumstances Mr. Smith's was as fine a last hole as I ever saw.

The University Match has produced some last holes to curdle the blood. 1920 was a desperate affair, the more so because poor despised Cambridge was not supposed to have the slightest hope. And then gradually it dawned on us in the second round that they had a chance, a real chance, a glorious chance. The occasion proved almost too much for the players, and there were some wonderful last holes. Mr. Walls of Cambridge was dorny one on Mr. Mellor of Oxford. If he won Cambridge won. Mr. Mellor completely missed his second to the home hole and did not even reach the bunker. "O sweet, O lovely Walls," we whispered, slightly emending the language of Pyramus and Thisbe. "Anything in the air will do now." But the ball did not go into the air. It went straight along the ground into the bunker. It stayed there for a little but it got out at last: Mr. Mellor hit a shot off the shank of his mashie and did other singular things, and ultimately won the hole in six to seven. Off they went to the thirty-seventh hole, and there came to the home hole Mr. Morris of Cambridge and Mr. Gurney of Oxford. Here the parts were reversed. Oxford went along the floor into the bunker. Cambridge missed more heroically and completely and stayed short. The sequel differed, however, for Mr. Morris then rose to the occasion and laid his pitch within six inches of the

hole. It was too much for Mr. Gurney, as well it might be, and just as Cambridge broke into delirious cheering, a faint echo came from the far-away first hole. Mr. Walls had won at the thirty-seventh and Cambridge had won by six matches to three. *Nunc dimittis!*

A wonderful finish was that in 1911 at Rye when Oxford won. Here it all depended on the last couple (poor devils, it always does), Mr. Marzetti of Cambridge and Mr. Wakefield of Oxford. There are few more alarming holes to play in a crisis than the eighteenth at Rye. First there is a carry over a big and towering bunker, and then a second shot down a comparatively narrow neck with perdition below the green to the right and a chance of breaking the club-house windows on the left. The situation was this, that Mr. Wakefield had only to halve this hole to win the match for Oxford. Both had good tee shots and Mr. Marzetti played the odd, a sound enough shot in the circumstances but a little hooked, and the ball lay in the hummocky ground to the left of the green. Mr. Wakefield pushed his right out. Over the bank it went and plunged down the precipice into the wilderness of sand and ruts and bents below. Mr. Marzetti might not get a four, but, thought Cambridge, "a five will do, for that poor young man will never get up the hill again." Mr. Wakefield's ball lay clear but on a slightly hanging lie. To pitch up was very difficult, and if he did pitch up he would certainly run over. He did the one possible thing: took a straight-faced iron and banged the ball hard into the bank. Up spouted the ball, cleared the crest, and lay within six feet of the hole. It was a blow that could not be parried—a shot so deadly that

it seemed in the moment of bitterness to be a fluke, but if I ever thought so I now recant and apologise.

One more finish in the University match may be recorded, that in 1896, the last of the series ever played on classic Wimbledon Common. The match was halved, and though there were eight players a side and the reckoning was by holes, the total score on either side was but four. Both sides were good that year, a great deal better, unless I am getting into my dotage, than they have been in many years since, although there are now so many more players.

Mr. Darwin was the first Cambridge man. He was so surprised and delighted at beating Mr. Bob Mitchell, a very good golfer in those days, by two and one, that he lost the last hole from lightness of heart. It was a dreadful example and followed with dreadful unanimity by the next six Cambridge men. Some of them were not to blame. Mr. Beckford, for instance, could not help himself when the late Mr. W. A. Henderson holed his pitch for a two. Still, this miserable little hole—no more than a “kick and spit”—cost us too many fives. We were three holes down with one match to play, but in that match Mr. Hillyard of Cambridge was three up on the late Mr. Ronny Mitchell. He put his second to the last hole within a yard of the pin, Mr. Mitchell played three and still was about three yards away. He holed out in the two more like a stout-hearted golfer. Mr. Hillyard played rather too cautiously and the ball dribbled towards the hole, then fell away to the left and refused to go in. And so the hole and the match were halved, and smash went the late Sir George Newnes’s umbrella on the flinty turf of Wimbledon.

Finally, though I hesitate to describe any game of my own in such good company, I did once take part—a very inglorious part—in an historic finish, and here it is to make a cheerful ending to the chapter. In 1910, at Hoylake, Mr. Horace Hutchinson and I met in the second round of the Championship. At the end of eighteen holes we were all square and went to the nineteenth. I had a moderate drive, he a good one well down to the left and clear of the corner. I played the odd and topped the ball hard into the turf wall which guards the out-of-bounds field, so that it fell back into the sandy ditch. Mr. Hutchinson, having about ten ways at his disposal of winning the hole, elected to try to lose it. He took a brassy and sliced out of bounds—the wind was blowing straight on his back. He dropped another ball and put that out, too. At the third attempt he got well down the course, but not as far as the green. That was four. So far he had been the hero of the story. Now comes my turn. I ploughed my ball out of the ditch in three, and might with a really good cleek or spoon shot just reach the green. If I played safe I might hope for a half in seven, which would have been a direct gift from Providence. Being impiously greedy, being also no doubt in a state of some mental anxiety, I did not play safe, but went for the green with a driving mashie, and the wind blew the ball out of bounds. I had another shot with the driving mashie and the wind blew that ball out of bounds. I had a third shot with a precisely similar result. Then, having no more ammunition, I gave up the battle. “And you two,” said Mr. Angus Hambro as we walked in, “set up to teach people how to play golf!”

IN many ways I have not, I am afraid, much more than a Cook's tourist's qualification for writing a chapter on American golf, since I spent no more than a most interesting six weeks there before the war. Duncan has written on the methods of some of the leading American players, and I do not mean to trespass on his preserves. I was, however, one of the very few Englishmen who saw *the* historic American contest, that at Brookline in 1913, in which Mr. Francis Ouimet played off the triple tie for the Championship with Vardon and Ray and won it. I was Mr. Ouimet's marker, and my name is enshrined upon his card which ought to be among the archives at Washington. The match was such a remarkable one, and I remember its crucial moments so clearly, that I think it is worth while even now to set down some account of it.

The course of the Country Club, for that is its official name, is not quite what we are here accustomed to think of as a Championship course, but it is a very good sound course, nevertheless. The stranger's first impression is one of blank consternation, since he sees nothing but a large, flat field. This is the polo ground over which the first and last holes are played—good enough holes as far as the bunkers round the greens are concerned, but dull and depressing. There is very quickly a change, however, into much more billowy and interesting country, where there are belts of woodland on either



side of the fairway, and at one or two of the holes little jutting promontories of rock here and there. The woodland holes remind one of some of the Surrey courses, except that there is no sand or heather and the turf is rather of the park or meadow type. But it is good turf, and the greens are as good as they can be, with plenty of pace and undulations that are not too much exaggerated. Some of the holes have, I confess, but blurred outlines now in my memory, but two which come next door to one another remain very clear. One is the ninth, a long hole of terrifying and rather melodramatic appearance, where, after a tee shot down a valley, there is a second shot rather uphill, only to be attempted by a big driver with a big wind behind him. On the hillside are rocks and big bunkers, and the careful player is short with his second, and so home in three. The tenth is the hole which seemed to me to have a good deal to do with the final result in the great match. It is quite a short hole, no more than a mashie-niblick shot in length, but it is quite uncompromising and the green looks horribly small from the tee. Everywhere there are woods and bunkers, and in front there is first a stream and then a big bunker with a timbered face. There are plenty of other good holes—the seventeenth, for instance, which Mr. Ouimet twice played magnificently at most critical moments—but those are the two that stick in my head.

Never did a course have worse weather to stand in a Championship. It rained and rained and went on raining, the air was cold and cheerless, and before the day of the tie came the ground was a dripping sop.

On the last day of the Championship the play was

extraordinarily exciting. The three men who ultimately tied all had fine chances, frittered them away in a variety of ways, and then recovered by courageous finishes. Ray started first in the morning to play the crucial third round: he went very crooked, took too many fives and a six or two, and was out in 41: then pulled himself together and came home grandly in 35. Vardon, too, took 41 out and began badly home: then finished very steadily and took 79, which made him equal with Ray for three rounds. Mr. Ouimet, playing much later, began brilliantly, had some disasters in the middle, and finished splendidly. He tied with the two Englishmen at 225, whereas Barnes, Hagen, and McDermott, who had all had good chances, were still a little way behind.

When Mr. Ouimet finished his third round, Ray and Vardon were already playing their last. Both clearly felt the strain of supporting their country's honour against so big a field, and both made all sorts of mistakes on the way out that were enough to make the poor British spectator weep. But both again got hold of themselves and their emotions, and struggled home by sheer power of sticking to it in 79 apiece. Once more danger threatened from Barnes, Hagen, and McDermott, and once more they could not quite go the pace to the end. Mr. Ouimet with 78 to win had now the chance of gaining immortality, but for a while he seemed, as old Tom Morris once said of his son, "ower young." He was bunkered and bunkered again on the way out, and took 43 to the turn. Then came a five in place of a three at the short tenth and all seemed over. I remember, as I splashed out in the mud and

rain to meet him, that I was already composing sentences to telegraph home, to the effect that he had fought a great fight but the burden had been just too heavy for him to bear. I had to alter all those kind and possibly condescending sentences. From the tenth hole onwards he threw off all trace of nervousness and played splendidly. Even so, the effort seemed too late, for he needed a three and a four at the last two holes to tie, and they were good "four" holes."

At the seventeenth he played a fine iron shot and holed a three-yarder for his three, and pandemonium broke loose. I looked at the faces all round me grotesquely contorted with cheering and yelling, and I shall never forget the sight. Still the last hole was to come—two good shots across the muddy polo ground with a big cross-bunker in front of the green. The second shot, though well struck, had not much to spare, and a four was still difficult. Mr. Ouimet played a perfect little run up to within five feet: then, taking one short, confident look at the line, hit his ball slap into the middle of the hole.

Heaven knows, this was exciting enough, but it was nothing to the next morning when the triple tie was played off over one round of eighteen holes. The rain still came down, and each player's caddie bore a towel to dry the grips of the clubs. Despite the wet the crowds came pouring out of Boston, so that the course was black with them. These were marshalled by a whole orchestra of megaphones, and by flagmen who looked very picturesque standing on the promontories of rock, red flags in hand. Certainly the spectators

cheered frequently and freely, but in the circumstances they behaved, if I may say so, well and generously.

Mr. Ouimet was then only about twenty years old. Before the Amateur Championship at Garden City some fortnight earlier he had hardly been known out of Boston. It was a tremendous test for him to have to stand up to these two professional giants in single combat and play shot for shot against them. I suppose that nobody would have been much surprised if he had failed to play his game, and the thought uppermost in the minds of most competent critics when the game started was not so much "Will he win?" as "Will he make a real fight of it?" I am not going to describe the game hole by hole, but this particular question was soon answered, so calmly did Mr. Ouimet play, so clearly had he got command of his muscles in the putting, so well did he keep up with his adversaries in the long game. At the third hole he outdrove both Ray and Vardon, had to watch them play fine, straight, long second shots on to the green, and then played a still better one himself. At that point he and Vardon were level and Ray, who took three putts, a stroke behind. The next two holes gave Mr. Ouimet a chance of breaking down, and he showed that he had no intention of doing so. At the fourth he pushed out his tee shot into the edge of the rough, played a good shot out of it, and resolutely holed a missable putt for his four. At the fifth he put his second shot with a brassy out of bounds, and there was something of a gasp and a groan from the crowd. He dropped another ball, played a magnificent shot, and got a five. Neither of the other two could quite get a four and a dangerous moment

was safely past. At the sixth Vardon holed a putt for three, at the seventh Ray did so: Mr. Ouimet stuck to his fours, and at the eighth he, too, got a three by laying a pitch stone-dead amid delirious cheering. Ray holed a long putt for three here, too, and all three were now equal. All got their fives at the long and perilous ninth and were all square at the turn.

Next came the tenth, the little "island" hole I described. All three were on the green, which was very soft and muddy. Vardon and Ray both had to putt over the holes in the green which their balls had made before jumping backwards. Both were some way short, and both needed three putts. Mr. Ouimet's ball was very muddy, but he got down in his two putts and took the lead. It was a critical moment, and after it he never let his lead go. At the twelfth he was two up. At the thirteenth Vardon got one back with a good pitch and putt. It seemed that some one must make a bad mistake soon, so hot was the pace, and it turned out to be Ray. He was bunkered at the fifteenth, took two to get out and was four strokes behind Mr. Ouimet. There was an end of him, but Vardon was still only one behind and he had the honour to the sixteenth, a not very easy short hole. He played a beauty to within six yards—a nasty one to go after, but Mr. Ouimet followed it well. He got his three and Vardon could do no better. Mr. Ouimet one stroke up on Vardon with two holes to play.

The seventeenth settled it. Vardon, realising that desperate measures were necessary, tried a short cut straight for the hole and was trapped. He could do no better than five. Mr. Ouimet steered his tee shot

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perfectly to the right of the hazard, and with his second lay six yards from the hole.

It was a downhill putt on a fast green. He might not, one thought, put it dead. He did better, for he hit the ball perfectly truly and perfectly gently; it went trickling on and in and, just as on the day before at this same spot, there burst forth a shout of pure joy. It was all over now unless Mr. Ouimet fell down dead, for he had a lead of three strokes. He had the best of the drives to the last hole, and so had what must have been a trying wait. Ray put his second on the green: Vardon from a heavy lie went into the bunker. There was a pause, a clearing away of the crowd, and a practice swing with his iron by Mr. Ouimet. Bang went the ball—a perfect shot over the bunker from the moment it left the club. That ended it. He got his four easily, beat Vardon by five shots and Ray by six, and was swallowed up in the great, cheering crowd.

There never was a better illustration of the fact that golfers can, as a rule, only play as well as their adversaries will let them. People at home thought that Ray and Vardon must have played badly to be beaten by so many strokes. They did play below their form on the second day of the Championship when they should not, I suppose, have allowed any one to catch them; but in the tie match they did nothing of the sort. Vardon certainly played very well indeed till the last two holes, when he lost some strokes in the natural and proper endeavour to make a spurt. Ray played well for the first fourteen holes, and if he failed then the pace was really tremendous. Mr. Ouimet's 72 in that weather and on that muddy course was just about as

good a single round as ever was played. I thought then and I think now that it would have beaten anybody.

When I came back from America after seeing that memorable battle there were two questions which I was asked by all my golfing acquaintances. The first was, "What is Ouimet like?" the second, "What is the National Golf Links like?" The first I have endeavoured to answer, and Mr. Ouimet has answered it himself by coming here, as we all hope he will again. As the National Golf Links cannot be brought here, and as it is one of the two or three finest courses I have ever seen, I will try to answer the second question now.

When Mr. C. B. Macdonald first laid out the course, there were the wildest rumours here as to its nature. It was said that precise measurements had been taken of the eighteen best holes on British courses and that their eighteen exact counterparts had been built up on a flat plain somewhere in Long Island. This is very far from being the truth. The ground is not a flat and featureless expanse, but rich in bold undulations and natural features, and there are, in fact, only four holes there—or perhaps we may allow five—which are in any sense copied from British originals. Of these five only two are really close copies, and though they are both fine holes and the architecture has been extremely skilful, I think most people are agreed that the best holes on the course are not these copies but those which owe their merits only to the nature of the ground and the unfettered genius of Mr. Macdonald.

I have been looking through cuttings from American papers to refresh my memory of some of the holes, and in one from the *Chicago Tribune* I discovered this

pleasing headline: "Darwin finds Course of Shinnecock source of wonder." And so I did. There may now be as good courses in America: I do not know, but I think there are none better in this country: certainly none conceived on a grander and bigger scale unless it be possibly Gleneagles. The National is a hard course to describe in British terms because we have nothing quite like it. In one sense it is a seaside course, for it stands on a sandy spit between the waters of Bull's Head Bay on one side and Peconic Bay on the other, with a distant sight of the Atlantic. The bunkers are as sandy as one would infer from these surroundings, but the turf is not our seaside turf. It is inland turf of a good but not too flattering variety, since the ball lies close to the ground; and there is definite rough as a rule on either side of the fairway. This is not heather nor gorse nor trees, but consists of low and stunted bushes which are, I believe, huckleberry and bayberry bushes. I saw it first of all at the moment of a most lovely sunset with the short American twilight fast coming on, and it is this impression that remains with me most clearly. But it is a wrong impression in this, that it conveys an impression of calm and quietude. The National is not a calm course, because there is generally a fresh wind blowing there, and in this respect it is a better test and a sterner school than are most American courses, however rigorously they are bunkered.

It is a very long and difficult course, calling for power and skill with all clubs, and it is also a beautifully varied course. The work of golfing architects, however skilful, comes as a rule to bear the hall-mark



of their individual creators, which is easily recognisable. They lay out so many courses that this is almost inevitable. Mr. Macdonald in laying out the National managed to keep clear of this danger. He appears to have set to work with a wonderfully open mind. It is impossible to say that any particular set of holes is typical of him. There are holes of all schools—plateau greens, punch-bowl greens, greens calling for big carrying shots over big bunkers, greens that are fiercely guarded on each side with a narrow entrance void of trouble—and it is hard to say that one is better than the other.

The holes which are imitated from our own are naturally those that most interest the visitor to begin with. The second, which calls for a high, straight, wooden-club shot on to the green, has a suggestion and no more of the Sahara at Sandwich. The third is avowedly founded on the Alps at Prestwick, an imitation to which the land naturally lends itself. There is much the same shot down something of a gorge with rough ground upon its sloping sides, and the same blind second to be played over a towering hill. The green, however, has quite a different appearance to the Ayrshire green, since it is only just over the top of the hill, with no long drop down to it. And the feeling of the hole is different, because the American hole is the third and the Scottish hole is the seventeenth, and we go out for a big carry early in a round in a much more jovial spirit than we do so near the end, when a slip may be fatal.

The fourth hole is founded on the North Berwick Redan, and is, I should say, more difficult than its

original. At any rate it is a very fine short hole. The other two imitated holes are the seventh, which is the seventeenth at St. Andrews, and the thirteenth, which is the eleventh also at St. Andrews, the famous High Hole coming in. Of these the first is an extraordinarily good copy without being superficially in the least like its prototype. Where at St. Andrews are the black sheds of the stationmaster's garden, there is at the National only a wilderness of rough ground. Where at St. Andrews there is the road with its coming and going and passers-by who stop to see the play, the National has only more rough sandy waste and complete solitude. We cannot think of the St. Andrews hole without the people and the houses, just beginning to close in near the green, and here are no houses and no people. Again, as in the case of the Alps, the American hole is a little less terrifying for not being the seventeenth. If we insist on pitching our third shot, like the obdurate Taylor, instead of running up, perhaps by easy stages, on to the narrow little plateau green "perched up between the devil and the deep sea," we may very likely run over into the hazard that corresponds to the road and lose the hole; but there are eleven holes left instead of only one in which to retrieve the error. Yet as far as a copy can be perfect, this one is, barring perhaps something of the hardness and pace of the St. Andrews turf.

It is just this impossibility of getting exactly the same quality and speed of turf which makes the thirteenth at the National seem decidedly unlike the High Hole. Strath and the Shell bunker and the rest are all there to a fraction of an inch, but the green is a

little softer and greener and the ball does not go bounding over into the Eden so relentlessly. Besides, there is here one quite definite difference. Some people urge it as a reproach against the St. Andrews hole that there is nothing directly in the way between tee and flag, and that the hole can be played with a wooden putter. It may be so, though personally I have never seen it done. It certainly may be said, however, that by a judicious "scuffle" from the tee with no higher ambition in view than a four, calamity should be avoided. This cannot be done at the National, where there is a water hazard in front of the tee and the ball must be played into the air. Nevertheless, by reason of the slower green it is, I think, the easier hole of the two.

There are many other holes that come back to my mind and seem to clamour for description. There is a really cruel short hole, for example, the sixth, where the hole is cut in a little tiny islet of safety shaped something like a horseshoe. If you stay in the horseshoe, well and good. If you do not, the green slopes everywhere away from the flag towards a surrounding bunker. The tee shot is only a pitch with the niblick, but what a nervous one! There is the Cape hole, too, the fourteenth if I remember rightly, with the green almost jutting into the waters of Bull's Head Bay. I once described it as a little "meretricious," and perhaps it is not so classical and so sound as the rest, but wonderfully fascinating.

Finally, there is one of the very best home holes I have ever seen, that gives one no rest and does not let one play a nice, safe, otiose game even if one is dormy one up and the enemy is in a bunker. First, there is the

tee shot with a bunker on the left and "tiger country" on the right; then the second to be slashed over a big cross-bunker; then the run up on to a wavy green and the awful possibility of running over into space. What a hole and what a round, but what a good lunch one gets after it is all over!

THE END.











